

**The Problem(atics) of Post-Colonisation:  
The Subject  
in  
Settler Post-Colonial Discourse**

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Christine A. Prentice

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### Abstract.

This thesis concerns aspects of settler post-colonial discourse, examined through fictional and non-fictional prose writing from Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Major works discussed have been published between the 1970s and 1990s. These include fiction by Kate Grenville, Elizabeth Jolley, and Sally Morgan, from Australia; Alice Munro, Audrey Thomas, Aritha Van Herk and Rudy Wiebe, from Canada; and Stevan Eldred-Grigg, Patricia Grace, Keri Hulme, Witi Ihimaera and Ian Wedde, from New Zealand.

Section One of the thesis begins with an Introduction which contextualises the following discussion in relation to background issues of definition of the term 'post-colonialism', and then describes the scope, method and selection of texts in the thesis. The argument is briefly stated and expanded upon in discussion of the theoretical perspectives. Chapter One suggests a reading of Empire as (M)Other in relation to Britain's settler colonies, and the status of the latter, within the terms of the familial metaphor, as extensions of Empire. The ambivalence of that status -- as extension and as autonomous being -- is explored in consideration of affective relations between colonies and Empire. Also considered are the consequences of this 'familial'-colonial background for the attainment of 'autonomous' Nationhood, imaged as 'self-hood' according to a masculine model of the self. Analysis of discourses of (national) identity reveals 'subjective sovereignty' to be a discursive illusion, disturbed by two sources of 'disunity': 'neo-imperialism' is suggested as an 'external' threat to sovereignty, while post-colonialism constitutes the 'difference within', akin to the functioning of the unconscious in relation to the subject. The chapter concludes with an analysis of subjective processes in three fictional texts.

Section Two introduces a focus on how subjectivity is articulated through post-colonial discourses. Chapter Two explores the post-colonial textual mediation of relationships to the land, including the representation of land and landscape in writing, and the resultant facilitation of settler appropriation of the land -- of belonging. It concludes with a reading of post-colonial fictional critiques of colonisation and textuality as the basis of an authentic relationship to the land. Chapter Three considers discourses from indigenous and 'other' subject-positions

which, rather than subsuming the land under their own identity, seek to gain and express their identity in relation to the land, attempts at elision of the alienating intervention of textuality. It concludes with discussion of texts which problematise the authority of textuality. Chapters Four and Five more fully examine the subject-positions of 'self' and 'other' in the context of the settler post-colonial ambivalence of authority and authenticity. Chapter Four considers strategies of privileging and appropriating the discursive place of the 'post-colonised' in order to authenticate the authority of the 'post-colonisers'. Chapter Five addresses the 'authorising' of the 'other' into a 'self', or a subject in discourse, and entry into the discursive market as the ambivalent attempt both to accede to subjectivity and to articulate it with the integrity of authenticity. The problems with this invoke the subjective problematic of hybridity which is introduced at the end of Chapter Five.

The third section develops the preceding exploration of discourses into a consideration of subjective and discursive *problematics*, informed by an understanding of post-colonialism as a condition of instability resulting from the re-introduction of what the dominant (National) discourse constitutively excludes. In its phallogentric subjective moment, the exclusion is shown to be that of the maternal body and thus any possibility of a feminine sex; in its imperially-informed cultural moment, it is difference and heterogeneity which are submitted to and subsumed under the colonising gaze: they are disavowed, and the disavowed objects repressed to the 'national' unconscious. Chapter Six posits an analogy between the productions of sexual and colonial difference. Similarly in that chapter the return to, and reconsideration of, motifs and analyses in the thesis enacts the thematic-analytic focus on the return of the body and its contaminations of unity, purity and linearity. In Chapter Seven, the theory of the abjection of the subject is employed to suggest a reading of the non-autonomy and non-integrity of settler post-colonial subjectivities and cultures: the settler post-colonial subject is abjected by the internal difference of its own heterogeneity -- the body-difference for which the metaphor of the land (as mother) is used -- and by the perceived radical cultural otherness or externality of post-modernism. However, it is argued that these others are constitutive of the post-colonial self, and that cultural and political agency must therefore relinquish its privileging of purity and sameness, principles which themselves re-play the dynamics of imperialism. Chapter Seven concludes with an argument against the

imperialism of identity and against the identity of a text. Chapter Eight concludes the third Section, and the thesis as a whole, with the exploration of a textual-cultural 'case-study' in the discourses and problematics which have constituted the preceding discussions.



# THE PROBLEM(ATICS) OF POST-COLONISATION: THE SUBJECT IN SETTLER POST-COLONIAL DISCOURSE.

Abstract.

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### Note on Textual Practices.

I have often used textual features such as parentheses in unusual ways within phrases and even within words. In every case the purpose has been not simply to change the meaning or significance of the words -- to *subvert* -- but to allow them to hold a number of simultaneous, often inconsistent, and sometimes contradictory meanings, all of which are possible readings or interpretations of the language used. This strategy opposes phallogentric language, and enacts the complexity and ambivalence of settler post-colonial discourse. Although I retain the forms used in original sources within quotations, I employ hyphens in terms such as post-colonialism, post-modernism, and post-structuralism, my formulation being motivated by the preference for representing the possibilities of articulation between the constituent parts of each term.

All italicised words and phrases within quotations belong to the original unless it is specifically noted that the italicisation is my own. Underlinings within quotations are all my own emphases, and are used to avoid confusion particularly where the quotation itself contains italicised words. I have avoided the practice of italicising or providing bracketed translations of words or small phrases in indigenous languages which occur either in quotations from texts, or where appropriate in my own discussion. In the former instance there is almost always sufficient contextual information to make the sense clear, and in the latter I similarly attempt to ensure that the context is clear to the reader. Similarly, I have avoided the use of sexist language or other inappropriate forms, such as 's' plurals for Maori words. However, where these occur within quoted sources, I do not gloss them with 'sic'. Readers are now aware of the unacceptability of sexist language, and are able to recognise it in earlier sources without its having to be explicitly noted.

Finally, citations from fictional texts are followed by page number in brackets.

# **SECTION I**

**INTRODUCING THE SUBJECT**

**OF**

**POST-COLONIAL DISCOURSE**

## INTRODUCTION.

### I. Background: Issues of Definition.

'Post-colonialism' is not primarily a literary term. Indeed, the word declares its historical or temporal component (post-), and its political basis (colonialism). Thus it is clear that on one level the term refers to a condition following colonialism. The simplest and least helpful definition of post-colonialism would be the legalistic one of having been, but no longer being, a colony. However, this definition is both misleadingly static and so general as to be no more than an initiating gesture, opening up more searching questions as to what it means no longer to be a colony. Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra refer to "the equivocation with history contained in the prefix 'post'. As with other fashionable combinations such as 'postmodernism', the prefix seems to construct a simple version of history in which the 'modern' or the 'colonial' is totally superseded." They maintain, however, that "it is useful to distinguish between the postcolonial as an historical moment, and . . . postcolonialism . . . in which certain tendencies are always inherently present. Postcolonialism in this second sense is the underside of any colonialism, and it can appear almost fully formed in colonial societies before they have formally achieved independence."<sup>1</sup> This view usefully recognises that the 'post-' of post-colonialism is a qualifier which introduces a reflexive element into what is qualified. To apply analogously to post-colonialism Simon During's advocating of a diacritical approach to post-modernism, it can be said that "given that 'post-' which rules its usage, it remains a notion which needs to be defined against [colonialism]."<sup>2</sup> Therefore the purely temporal and serial notion of post-colonialism as following colonialism must be expanded to include colonialism's continued implication in post-colonialism.

On the other hand, unlike 'modernism', 'structuralism' and other terms whose primary application has been to epistemologies, ontologies and the cultural products of these (although of course they are implicitly political), and which have also generated forms governed by the prefix 'post-', colonialism differs fundamentally in that it names a real relation in terms of specific world-historical events. The nature of the imperial-colonial encounter has varied with time and place, from classical Greek colonies as "replica . . . societies,"<sup>3</sup> to territorial expansion and the creation



of political and economic dependencies. It has similarly differed between intent and effect, so that it can be claimed, for example, that "modern Western colonialism . . . still means that a power possessing superior force is holding another people under control. . . . But its aim is not exploitation of natives, but a development of both natives and resources."<sup>4</sup> This is a view which posits subjection as an unintentional and unfortunate by-product of the positive 'civilising' intention. However, the coincidence of these two aspects of colonisation is articulated in the definition of colonisation as "the expansive force of a people; it is its power of reproduction; *it is its enlargement and multiplication through space*; it is the subjection of the universe or a vast part of it to that people's language, customs, ideas and laws."<sup>5</sup> While such definitions privilege the cultural productivity of colonialism over the economic and/or political 'side-effects', Margaret Atwood emphasises that "there are cultural side-effects which are often identified as 'the colonial mentality' . . . but the root cause for them is economic."<sup>6</sup> Finally, even definitions which foreground the economic basis of colonialism demonstrate variance between intent and effect, so that it can be recognised that

Economic gain and political power are important *motives* for creating a colonial situation . . . [but] colonialism could be characterised by the search for economic and political advantage without concomitant *real* economic or political gains, and sometimes even with economic or political losses.<sup>7</sup>

Historians' discussions of the colonisation of Australia, Canada and New Zealand reflect the co-existence of these conflicting perspectives on colonialism. For example, C. Manning Clark describes the complicity of the 'civilising mission' with the material oppression of the Aborigines in the colonisation of Australia:

The Europeans offered the aborigines the precious gift of their civilisation in return for the right to use the wealth of their land. The European hoped that the aborigine would perceive the benefits of civilisation, abandon the life of the savage, and become a labourer on the bottom rung of the ladder of European society.<sup>8</sup>

By contrast, Keith Sinclair emphasises the complicity of colonisation and Christianity, from the belief of the Aborigines Protection Society "that 'Christianity could be harmonized with colonization,'" to Samuel Marsden's belief that the Maori would not be converted unless they were "also raised in the scale of civilisation. They should be taught the arts and

handicrafts of Europe as well as the gospels."<sup>9</sup> Similarly in Canada in the 1840s, "Colonization and religion were to go hand in hand. The clergy took up the challenge and formed colonization associations, in order to people the vacant lands."<sup>10</sup> However, not all involved in the Christian mission were optimistic about their relationship to colonisation. Anglican and Wesleyan missionary societies noted, with regard to New Zealand, "nothing to convince them that systematic colonisation would not hinder if not cancel out the work of the missionaries."<sup>11</sup> Clearly no one theory of colonialism can be adequate to explain the political fact in its many specific forms and resultant socio-political formations, nor to unify the different positions and perspectives in relation to colonialism out of which the many definitions are produced.

Further, the term 'colonisation' has been applied in ways ranging from metaphor to direct political analysis of the position of other oppressed groups, notably women. Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues that "the term 'colonization' has come to denote a variety of phenomena in recent feminist and left writings in general. . . . to characterize everything from the most evident economic and political hierarchies to the production of a particular cultural discourse about what is called the 'Third World.'"<sup>12</sup> In positing feminism itself as a colonising discourse, Mohanty argues that "However sophisticated or problematical its use as an explanatory construct, colonization almost invariably implies a relation of structural domination, and a suppression -- often violent -- of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question."<sup>13</sup> This contrasts with Frankel's suggestion that rather than viewing colonisation as "merely a form of territorial expansion," we should recognise a colony as "a social unit in process of transformation,"<sup>14</sup> a view which, while it conveniently elides the violence which attends colonisation as a process, also allows theoretical room for the agency of the colonised. Thus a critical 'double-bind' is invoked, as Henry Louis Gates, Jr explains:

You can empower discursively the native, and open yourself to charges of downplaying the epistemic (and literal) violence of colonialism; or play up the absolute nature of colonial domination, and be open to charges of negating the subjectivity and agency of the colonized, thus replicating the repressive operations of colonialism. In agency, so it seems, begins responsibility.<sup>15</sup>

If 'colonialism', as the term upon which post-colonialism is dependent, is a term of such multiple and conflicting significations, how is it possible

to *define* post-colonialism? Indeed it is one of the lessons of the preceding discussion that post-colonialism cannot be substantively defined in unified and comprehensive terms: it has no 'identity'. There are further parallels between the instability of the term 'colonialism' and the way in which I use the term 'post-colonialism' in this thesis. While retaining this understanding of the suppression of subjective heterogeneity, I specify settler (post-)colonialism as rendering subject-positionality more complex and ambivalent than overt domination and suppression. With regard to the debate about whether colonialism has an economic basis with cultural 'side-effects', or a cultural basis with economic 'side-effects', I argue the impossibility of determining finally relations of cause and effect, and suggest rather that colonialism locates culture in an economic exchange relation within which subjects are actively positioned. With regard to the slippage between intent and effect noted by theorists of colonialism, I posit this as indicative of a complexity of subject-formation, and subjectivity beyond (the politics of) conscious choice. These are the issues I believe require the analysis rather than the embarrassed silence of the politically engaged critic.

Because the problems of defining post-colonialism inform the analysis of subjectivity and discourse through which the particular problematics identified in the thesis emerge, I shall expand upon these ideas in discussion of the argument below. First, however, it is necessary to explain the scope and methods of the thesis in order to contextualise the argument that follows.

## II. The Scope and Method of the Thesis.

(i) Scope. The rubric of 'settler post-colonialism' refers in this thesis to those societies which have developed out of the (predominantly) British settlement of colonised lands and the concomitant displacement of the indigenous populations, resulting in numerically and culturally dominant settler populations. I address this phenomenon in relation to Australia, Canada and New Zealand, through cultural discourses of the late twentieth century. Discussion of settler post-colonialism in these three countries raises the challenge of exploring the meaning of 'post-colonialism' in contexts where political and cultural issues are blurred by the lack of unified effort toward independence or an analysis of colonial oppression shared by the dominant culture. I do not claim wider purchase

for my argument than these contexts, although I similarly do not preclude the possibility that some of the cultural features and discursive strategies I identify may have relevance in other post-colonial situations. Nevertheless, where I use the term 'post-colonial' I refer only to settler post-colonialism in the three nations specified.

(ii) Method. The thesis is only broadly 'comparative': my intention was to analyse discourses across the three national contexts on the basis of similarities in demography, history, political structures, and even dominant cultures, while acknowledging important differences and specificities within these same, and other, areas. To an extent differences and similarities, once broadly established, have been assumed in the detail of my argument, so that the thesis does not necessarily seek comparable examples of all specific discourses or discursive strategies for each of Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The nations themselves are only partly useful as the determining structures within which discourses are analysed: they are the structures within which dominant discourses are institutionalised and others are marginalised and thus their power must be acknowledged; but at the same time they reinforce biases which themselves are destabilised -- though not necessarily dismantled -- within (other discourses of) post-colonialism.<sup>16</sup> The thesis treads a treacherous path between acknowledging the currency of political calls for the recognition of specificities, and the danger that these will too easily ossify into positive knowledges which are reductive of the multiplicity of ways in which 'reality' may be inscribed in discourse, and the multiplicity of positions from which 'reality' may be 'truly' constructed. Therefore, while positive knowledges are a crucial component of post-colonial discourse production, the aim of the thesis is not the production of 'knowledge' about Australia, Canada, or New Zealand, but an analysis of discourses in and of settler post-colonialism pertaining to all three, making comparisons and suggestions which will resonate differently for each. Similarly, while culture, race, gender, class, and sexuality are further structures within which subjectivity is institutionalised, and my analysis addresses these just as frequently as 'national identity', I do not posit them as more 'natural' than nationality; they are often constituted within, or in relation to, either the nation, or other discourses which exercise their own marginalisations or suppressions of heterogeneity. Therefore, rather than arguing for discursive relativism or pluralism, I point to the split subject of (post-

colonial) discourse, and its lack of mastery of the language which produces it.

(iii) Selection of Texts. When I refer to 'cultures' and 'practices' within discursive contexts, I refer to the textual construction and dissemination of these. Culture, discourse and identity are constructed and disseminated in language, and responses to issues will often be responses in and to texts. I have not sought to privilege empirical or experiential 'knowledge' over textual discourses, primarily because the thesis concerns analysis of textual discourse, not some (questionable) notion of 'culture' in the Real. To this extent, 'Truth' in the sense of 'accuracy' is not the object(ive) of my analysis, and this applies as much to non-fictional discourses as to unrecorded 'reality'. Non-fictional texts have been employed as discursive instances whose 'truth' lies in their purchase in a particular cultural context, their power to construct a cultural 'reality'. I have attempted an approximate balance in quantity, focus and contemporaneity of these between Australian, Canadian and New Zealand sources, although problems of access to materials have made Canadian sources harder to attain. I have attempted a similar balance between Australian, Canadian and New Zealand fiction, and between women and men writers. However, I do not claim that the fictions I have selected for discussion are 'representative', either of their 'nations' -- a notion which my focus upon difference and heterogeneity would surely problematise, anyway -- nor of *fiction within* their national contexts -- a similar qualification pertains. Neither are they selected on the basis of their evaluation as 'the best' or 'great': such critical assumptions are irrelevant to my thesis and untenable in the terms of my argument. Instead, I have selected texts which serve the type of argument I wish to make: it is not an argument about the 'state' or the characteristics of Australian, Canadian, or New Zealand fiction, nor even about post-colonial fiction in general; rather, it is about discourse and subjectivity, and fictional texts are used to explore and even contextualise this. For this reason, they are fictions published in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, so that they have entered the discursive 'market-place' in the late twentieth-century cultural context upon which my argument focuses. At the same time, my analysis seeks to demonstrate the literariness, constructedness, and artifice of all textuality, so that the method is applied similarly to fiction *and* to interviews, critical writings, cultural commentary and journalism. Because of the focus on *discourse* as opposed to literary genres and practices, I have considered it sufficient to

limit the range of texts for analysis to forms of prose writing. Finally, with regard to theoretical texts to which I have referred, I have respected the specificity of theoretical arguments and analyses to the cultural context of their production. For this reason I have privileged theories developed in relation to Australian, Canadian and New Zealand post-colonialism and other cultural analyses such as feminism and post-modernism. However, my method of analysing discourses in relation to subjectivity has required the use of psychoanalytic and other theorists of subjectivity, many of whom are European, British or American in either origin or location. It is consistent with my argument against the sealed autonomy of a post-colonial discursive and cultural context that I accept these as 'available' sources within these contexts, and it has simply been a matter of calculating their value for my own analysis. An important example consists in my use of the psychoanalytically-informed analyses of colonial discourse by Homi Bhabha: although he does not address the settler post-colonial societies that I do, both his psychoanalytic approach, and many details of his analysis have been methodologically valuable to my thesis. See my fuller introductory discussion below concerning theoretical perspectives in the thesis.

### III. The Argument of the Thesis.

In this thesis I posit 'post-colonialism' as a cultural problematic neither to be celebrated nor deplored, but rather to be considered as a condition whose constituent discourses and effects -- in short, whose *meaning* -- must be specifically calculated. I argue that 'post-colonialism' is, in the context of settler societies, usefully distinguished from 'Nation' as response to Empire. Nationhood interpellates a subjectivity which represses and suppresses the other of the colonial encounter, and constructs itself out of the valorised terms of the dominant culture (itself derived from Empire). Post-colonialism, as the return of the repressed -- the emergence of discourses which contest dominant structures, and the recognition and power of those discourses to destabilise the authority of dominant discourses -- constitutes a belated replaying of the colonial encounter with difference. In other words, a different discursive situation obtains: the 'emergence' of discourses of identity and resistance in relation to the constructions of a dominant (National) culture coincides with the re-energised (and narcissistic) desire for the 'local' other; the appeal of indigenous discourses of identity is that they offer 'belonging' and

'authenticity' to a dominant National culture whose authority is destabilised by the anxieties which attend the increasingly global delegitimation of imperialism (the basis for their existence), and at the same time which 'recognise' the threat of absorption into international in-difference by the neo-imperialist structures of late capitalism -- the 'external' Other. The reassurance offered by a 'local' culture which shores up against the imposition of cultural sameness by a western capitalist world-market compromises the 'decolonising' project of native peoples, neutralising their *difference* by appropriating it to the purposes of national legitimisation; at the same time, the authority and autonomy of the dominant discourse is compromised by its newly avowed constitutive dependence upon that which it has excluded.

Settler post-colonialism therefore confounds the positions of self and other in relation to discourse and discursive strategies. As a result, claims to identity -- claims which have been seen as constitutive of post-colonial discourse itself -- are abjected by disruptions from inside and outside that identity. However, if 'post-colonialism' has no 'identity', this does not mean that identity is not a heavily invested term (of desire) in post-colonial discourses. At the same time, though, the concept of identity is a concept in crisis: partly because of the competing claims to (privileged) identity made in post-colonial discourses -- these ambivalently problematise *and* strengthen the concept; but rather more crucially, the difficulties, in settler post-colonialism, of differentiating subject-positions through the contaminations of discourse problematise the autonomy and integrity upon which claims to identity are predicated. For example, Hodge and Mishra emphasise that "'postcolonialism' as the period that follows a stage of colonisation is not necessarily subversive, and in most cases it incorporates much from its colonial past."<sup>17</sup> This leads them to posit the necessity of distinguishing between oppositional and complicit post-colonialisms.<sup>18</sup> However, settler post-colonialism may be characterised by the ambiguity and ambivalence of oppositional and complicit positions, such that discursive strategies which may be identified as 'complicit' with the cultural legacies and political structures of colonialism may also be the most powerful strategies and discourses of resistance to oppression. Thus it is not only difficult, but unhelpful to attempt to distinguish positions once and for all. For example, it has been claimed that "Whatever its limitations, national identity is often the only shield the colonized have against the peremptory characterizations of the

colonizer."<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, the meaning of that assertion of national identity cannot be understood as identical with the parallel claims and assertions of a dominant settler culture: "While acknowledging that nationalism can still be a site of resistance and radical struggle, post-colonial perspectives shun the unitary, self-identical (masculine) subject projected by most forms of modern nationalism."<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, this does not preclude analysis which points to 'moments' of both subversion and complicity *within* discourses; this is central to my method. Therefore, unlike Hodge and Mishra, I believe that the term 'post-colonialism' may be used, in the words of Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, "to cover *all* the culture affected by the imperial processes."<sup>21</sup>

Just as 'colonialism' cannot be reconciled to one, self-sufficient definition, I maintain that post-colonialism is not contained within any one discourse, but addresses the multiplicity of, and relations between, discourses in tension. Rather than 'defined', it is *evoked* through a focus on sites of articulation, the battles between discourses. Indeed, it is my intention to challenge the privileging, in descriptive or definitive analyses of 'post-colonialism', of its programmatic content (of decolonisation), and through exploration of the proliferation and complexity of subjective and discursive positions, effectively to empty it of 'content' as such. Consistent with my contention that post-colonialism has no 'identity', I argue that there is no privileged subject of post-colonialism through which 'it' is most accurately articulated. However, these gestures must not be understood as emptying it of *politics*, but on the contrary to posit post-colonial politics as the continually changing tensions, negotiations, alliances and aporia of discourse and difference -- in short, as *political*.

Therefore, my argument stands in opposition to the view, "deconstruct identity and you deconstruct the agent of history and of politics."<sup>22</sup> On the contrary, I would argue, 'deconstruct identity and you *produce* the agent of history and of politics.' The argument is methodologically and theoretically consistent with the following succinct summary of the place and problem of identity in relation to politics:

This question of identity remains one of the major problems in the relation of psychoanalysis to the political. But the call for the old unified subject . . . raise[s] as many problems as it offers to solve. In the first place, it requires a kind of *imperialism of identity*, so that we are only allowed one, and our politics then has to have a single meaning too. . . . In the second place, the demand for a single identity



assumes that we can choose to have a single, coherent, unproblematised identity as a matter of will. In the third place, the argument for the necessity of the unified subject for politics relies on a fairly crude theory of intentionality, which imagines that you need a totally unified subject to be able to have any form of will or agency at all. Finally, it presupposes politics as an entirely intentional activity. The point about the challenge of psychoanalysis is that it questions all that.<sup>23</sup>

Through an exploration of cultural discourses in relation to psychoanalytic theories of subjectivity, I address the possibilities, even the *need*, for a politics which exceeds the hegemony of consciousness. The description of the theoretical perspectives which inform my thesis will clarify the argument further.

Finally, against the unity of the term 'post-colonialism', I suggest that there are three aspects of the post-colonial which must be differentiated in order to reveal the complexity of late twentieth-century settler post-colonial cultures or societies such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand. First, there are *post-colonial discourses, cultural products and practices*, some of which challenge dominant discursive constructions of culture, gender, and so on, and some of which do not, or are articulated from within these constructions. Nevertheless, all are either implicit or explicit cultural or subjective responses to legacies of colonial and colonising practices. Through thematic concerns with issues such as land and language, they raise and address questions of belonging, identity, authenticity and authority. Second, *post-colonialism* is what I understand to be the cultural condition characterised by the co-existence of these discourses, not in peace and tolerance, but variously in tension, negotiations, alliances, and aporia. Therefore, as opposed to an understanding of post-colonialism which implies or assumes 'decolonisation', I take it to be more the 'problem(atic)' than the solution. The third aspect I have specified and indeed emphasised, is *post-colonisation*, which I argue to be the strategic moment in post-colonial discourses which replays the colonial scene and re-instigates hybridity. It is this aspect which enables recognition of the complex constitution of the post-colonial subject as a subject of difference and desire; to be non-identical with its consciousness and non-autonomous from the other/Other. This, then, is the crux of my argument. However, it is in accord with the nature of the thesis, in its attempt to theorise settler post-colonialism, that a discussion of theoretical perspectives probably

elucidates more of the material which follows than does an isolated summary of the 'argument' itself.

#### IV. Miscegenations: Theoretical Perspectives.

The theoretical perspectives which inform this thesis reflect my argument about the 'impurity' of settler post-colonial cultures and discourses. Correspondingly, I enact a theoretical non-integrity through the variety of modes of thought I employ, and a non-autonomy of approaches which opposes the sealing of one approach from another. Fundamentally, I believe that settler post-colonialism cannot be theorised in any sense which assumes the cultural or discursive purity of any constituent ontology or epistemology: it is itself the messy product of the encounter and productive miscegenations of different worlds and different world views. It is the relations of these which comprise the theoretical materials of post-colonialism, and they include 'European' theories which are part of the cultural inheritance of the settler-majority societies under discussion. However, if I do not grant post-colonial theory the purity of integrity and the privilege of autonomy, I *do* privilege post-colonialism and post-colonial theorists (theorists of post-colonialism) as productive of the dialogue within which I wish to position my own discourse. A bibliographical strategy must therefore be explained: I create a separate section for (post-)colonial sources not in order to evoke a theoretical or analytical autonomy for the field, but to privilege that rubric for the analysis of cultural discourses; its contents are themselves reflective of the theoretical interactions to which I allude here. Similarly, I must clarify that a widely interactive body of theoretical sources and analyses does not imply an attempt at a global or totalising theory for post-colonialism, whose inclusiveness is understood as its proximity to a holistic Truth. As Henry Louis Gates has observed, "It's no longer any scandal that our own theoretical reflections must be as personal, reactive, and local as the texts we reflect upon. Of course, discarding the imperial agenda of global theory also means not having to choose *between* Spivak and Said, Greenblatt, Pease, or Jameson, Bhabha or JanMohamed or Parry, even Fanon or Memmi; or rather, it means not representing the choice as simply one of epistemic hygiene."<sup>24</sup>

Psychoanalysis is the most immediately visible theoretical basis for my analysis, a field which already has a history in the study of (post-)colonial

cultures. Gates identified, in the work of Frantz Fanon, "the convergence of the problematic of colonialism with that of subject-formation."<sup>25</sup> However, the convergence must be tempered with the recognition that "What seems potentially more fruitful is the dialogue in which, although the two discourses [of psychoanalysis and cultural theory] remain distinct -- they are always to some extent talking past each other -- the questions untranslatably specific to each can provoke new thinking and insights in the other."<sup>26</sup> Thus the relationship between these fields includes tensions and aporia, as well as some productive parallels, and any analysis must be sensitive to the specific conditions of each. My use of a psychoanalytical account of the formation of subjectivity is 'enabled' by the pervasive historical and contemporary discourses of *identity* which implicitly posit socio-Symbolic structures such as nation, culture, race and gender -- as well as, more conventionally, the individual -- as isomorphic with a human 'self', as subjects to and of desires, identifications and resistances in relation to 'others'. The idea of a nation or culture as a 'self' is a powerful metaphor or discourse; however it is usually articulated from a humanist, masculine subject-position. The 'self' is centred, and assumes the hegemony of consciousness. To the extent that it articulates a dominant epistemological perspective within the societies under discussion, it conforms to -- or produces -- a particular type of 'truth', and its power is not to be underestimated. It is in the context of such discursive production that it has been objected that "While certain structures of sexuality are provocatively mapped onto those of race, gender itself is eliminated in favour of an undifferentiated 'colonial subject'. And once again, the psychoanalysis that is used is that which many would consider the patriarchal version."<sup>27</sup> However, my strategy has involved the acknowledgement of the discourse and its appropriation in a manner which uses it 'against itself', in relation to theorists who have questioned its founding assumptions. This strategy is consistent with an understanding of post-colonialism itself as a cultural-discursive effect of questioning dominant National assumptions.

My approach therefore has a history which reaches back to some very conventional and at the same time questionable metaphorical bases. In the light of this I wish to refute the assumption that a psychoanalytic model must refer to the normative clinical practices of psychoanalysis, diagnosing maladjustments or illnesses and treating these according to conventionally accepted treatment practices informed by dominant

assumptions about social and individual norms. I distance myself theoretically and methodologically from such 'humanist' psychoanalysis, and emphasise that "It is cultural analysis not cultural therapy that is at issue here."<sup>28</sup> Specifically, my use of psychoanalytic theory comprises "psychoanalysis after the feminist rereading of Lacan's rereading of Freud," developments and revisions which have sought "to pose cultural and social questions in new ways, to see things differently."<sup>29</sup> Lacan's rereading of Freud emphasised the function of language and/in relation to the *unconscious*, that is, what is *repressed* in the assertion of the Self. Just as the psychoanalytic account of subjectivity has been revolutionised by the Lacanian theory of the unconscious which disrupts the presence and unity of the conscious Self, I argue that an analysis of post-colonial cultural discourse must acknowledge the otherness which disturbs unity. Thus both the 'I' and 'Nation' are problematised by the effects of otherness -- the 'others' of post-colonialism.

Further, feminist rereadings of Lacan have emphasised the *feminine*, that is, what is excluded by the phallogentric subjective norm. Indeed, it has been suggested that "you could say that Lacan produced the most effective repression of sex of all by semiotising it, turning it into a sign system and denying sex's ontological status in favour of that of linguistics."<sup>30</sup> I use that work of Julia Kristeva which describes, in relation to the traditional psychoanalytic focus on the mother-infant relationship, the function of the maternal body as that which is excluded by the phallogentric subject of culture; the body which represents the abjection or *failure* of that subject. However, the meaning of the body in such theories cannot be understood as constituting a 'natural' discourse outside of language. The value of theories of 'the body' in relation to a subversion of phallogentric privilege, and in the context of my own thesis, lies in their location within an understanding of a 'corporeal anti-humanism'. As Elizabeth Grosz warns, "Corporeal anti-humanism is *not* a return to essentialism or biologism. On the contrary, instead of presuming a 'natural' or biologically given body . . . [it refers] only to a socially constructed body, a body produced as such by specific powers. The body thus produced, the subjectivity thereby engendered, is an intensive point of investment for relations of power and resistance."<sup>31</sup> The work of Luce Irigaray exposes the already gendered terms of 'production' of sexual difference as 'explained' by Lacan. She, like Kristeva, addresses the blindspot of sexual difference in masculine and feminine subjective

formation, but goes further to explore the possibilities of bringing the excluded female specificity troublesomely back into language and philosophy. This work is consistent with the recognition of the need to go beyond the Freudian-derived model which continues to underlie even Kristeva's revision: specifically, "In the Freudian model, the impure manifests itself not in some other space but as a disruption to any pure realm."<sup>32</sup> Irigaray does not advocate essentialism so much as the exploration of the potential to realise a 'space' of impurity. Therefore, where Lacan may be seen to have substituted language for sex, feminist revisions have returned sex to language. This attention to differential structuring also enables the question of subjectivity in relation to other systems of hegemony and marginalisation, or dominance and oppression - - race, culture, sexuality -- to be asked. The terms of production of sexual difference, in being revealed as 'belated', parallel the terms of the colonial 'encounter with' or production of cultural difference. These terms have been described by Homi Bhabha as 'hybrid'.

In his feminist-psychoanalytically-informed analyses of colonial discourse, Bhabha demonstrates the relevance and usefulness of post-structuralist theories, theories which have been regarded with suspicion by those who speak for the marginalised or oppressed. For example, the question has been posed, "does the postmodern abandonment of the Enlightenment narrative of universality, freedom and equality leave feminist thought bereft of its most powerful weapons in the face of actual political struggle and historical confrontation?"<sup>33</sup> However, it has been pointed out that "the real anxiety posed by poststructuralism is that its temporality is such that it always makes you pose the question of where you are beginning. It's not the problem of ends; it always re-poses, as it were, from the end the question of where one is starting from. . . . It makes that point of beginning properly belated, so that nobody can claim that kind of purity."<sup>34</sup> Clearly, this understanding of post-structuralism is entirely consistent with my argument about the belatedness and impurity of the settler post-colonial cultural context and processes of subject-formation as the (belated) replaying of the colonial encounter with (the already hybridised terms of) difference. It also underlies the strategic prominence of introductions and re-introductions, and the inconclusive nature of 'conclusions', within the thesis itself.

Finally, the late twentieth-century context of my analysis, and the location of post-colonial societies *within* an international context from which they cannot remain isolated or autonomous, requires that I address the pertinence of post-modern cultural phenomena and analyses to those post-colonial cultures. Post-modernism can no more be reduced to a singular or static term than can post-colonialism: both must be thought in complexity even when they are thought in relation; however, in the context of this thesis I ground the consideration of post-modern cultural phenomena in their effects on and relevance for settler post-colonial cultures. Rather than the paranoid defensiveness of claims to epistemological purity, claims which regard beginnings as beyond question or challenge, my theoretical perspective advocates "an alliance across difference on the grounds of a related critique [which] seems to represent one of the ascendant political modes of the 1980s and 1990s."<sup>35</sup>

## V. The Organisation of the Thesis.

The thesis is divided into three sections. Section 1 contains this Introduction and Chapter One, and is introductory and orientational, grounding the material which follows in an analysis of the formation and structures of identity and subjectivity. Section 2 comprises Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five, and locates and articulates identity and subjectivity in discourses which I posit as thematically and epistemologically central to settler post-colonialism. Section 3 includes Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, and draws the preceding material together in consideration of 'problematics', particularly hybridity and abjection, which have been revealed in the subjective and discursive structures of settler post-colonialism. There is no formal conclusion to the thesis, but a variety of (in)conclusive gestures which enable the thesis to be concluded as a text, while, as textuality, remaining without closure. The following is a more detailed account of each section and chapter of the thesis.

(i) Section 1: The Introduction addresses the scope, method, organisation and argument of the thesis as a text. Chapter One completes the introductory first section through its establishment of the theoretical basis for, and the contextualisation of, the analysis of discourses which follows. It is through Chapter One that the subject -- of the thesis, and of post-colonial discourse and culture -- emerges, or is revealed. I posit a parallel between the terms 'colonialism', 'Nation' and 'post-colonialism',

and the psychoanalytic stages or processes of mother-infant interdependence and ambivalence, the assertion of the autonomous Self (through accession to the Name and the Law of the Father), and the decentring of that unified autonomous Self through the functioning of the unconscious and the insertion of the subject into a socio-Symbolic order which exceeds it. The emphasis in this chapter is on Nation -- a discursive rather than 'natural' structure -- and particularly on its comparison with the Self in its discursive articulation as 'I'. I explore the parallel in relation to historical and other cultural discourses which themselves employ the metaphor of culture as an evolving self, and then I problematise it with reference to feminist revisions of the informing psychoanalytic model. These demonstrate the already-gendered nature of the terms in which (phallogentric) psychoanalysis claims to describe (sexual) *difference*. It is against this problematisation of subjectivity and identity, of the positions of self and other, and of (sexual/cultural) difference, that chapters within the following section comprise analyses of specific *post-colonial* discourses.

(ii) Section 2: The relationships between the chapters in this section demonstrate more than linear progression in relation to the structure of the argument. Thus the organisation of the chapters enacts the strategic nature of reading itself. A linear reading reveals the emphasis on *land* in Chapters Two and Three, and a thematic concern with 'belonging' in a spatial sense, its signification of presence and authenticity, the 'self' as image located in relation to the land(scape) -- as opposed to the symbolic terms of 'nation' and 'authority' -- which contributes to its status as pivotal in discourses of contestation. Both chapters consider the role and function of textuality: in asserting the authority of belonging, and constituting the 'object' of resistance; while also providing the grounds of resistance, and the '*ungrounding*' of authority. Chapters Four and Five also concern spatial issues, specifically the location of the self as *subject* in discourse, and the *articulation* of belonging. In these chapters it is, in a sense, discourse rather than land which serves as the *ground* of assertion and resistance, in representation rather than 'presence'. Specifically, presence asserted in discourse, including discourse relating to the land, is shown to be the representation of presence, subject to the Symbolic laws of language. Land and the self are known through discourse and demonstrate the alienation of the subject in language.

A non-linear reading reveals a relationship between Chapters Two and Four, which focus upon the 'self' in relation to nation and authority, and Chapters Three and Five, which focus on the position of the 'other'. Such a reading also demonstrates the ambivalence of these positions of 'self' and 'other' in relation to (discourses of) the land and belonging in settler post-colonialism. The 'self' occupies the discursive position of authority, but is subject to anxiety regarding authenticity and thus may appropriate the subject-position of the 'other'. Conversely, the 'other' signifies authenticity, but lacks the subjective authority in the Symbolic order to articulate this. Thus it is necessary for the 'other' to appropriate the subject-position of the 'self'. The section ends with a consideration of the *différance* of identity, the hybridity of subjectivity where the constitutive ambivalence and interdependence of 'self' and 'other' along racial/cultural axes in settler post-colonialism problematises post-colonial discourses of identity.

(iii) Section 3: This section contains Chapter Six, which brings the body back to the thesis, privileging what has been excluded by phallogentric authority; Chapter Seven, which in the context of the return of the body, explores subject-bject relations and problematises, while not rejecting, notions of autonomy and integrity in political discourses and programmes of settler post-colonialism; and Chapter Eight is a case-study which takes a paradigmatic cultural and textual instance of the argument of the thesis, offering a reading of the fictional text in terms of that argument.

Along with the three chapters, this section comprises three different and distinguishable moments of its functioning. It is located at the end of the thesis, and thus it is 'in conclusion'. It was necessary to provide a sealing gesture -- a ceiling -- to the thesis as a textual object, while leaving the argument and the discourse open, as consistent with an analysis of post-colonialism which posits no conclusive 'arrivals', nor even stasis, but the endless negotiation of culture through the movement and circulation of discourse. The openness of providing no formal conclusion constitutes 'inconclusion', and consistent with this, aspects of Chapters Six to Eight function as re-readings of earlier material, in terms of the emergent problematics of hybridity and abjection, enacting the very process of open discourse for which I argue. Finally, the reintroduction of the excluded body of the other (of phallogentric subjectivity) suggests 'in(con)clusion', as the 'other' occupies a 'feminine' position in relation to the subjective



morphology of phallocentrism which privileges 'masculine' sameness and autonomy. In short, while exclusion forms the basis of phallocentric subjective morphology and authority in order to privilege sameness, inclusion (of otherness) is the basis of the post-colonial problematic. However, in using the term 'problematic', I suggest that inclusion is not simply the solution to cultural marginalisation and oppression to be celebrated. Rather, it raises questions of subjective morphology -- and agency -- founded on, or structured by, inclusion and difference, in relation to the currency of discourses of identity and the politics of consciousness.

## VI. Use and Definition of Terms.

A number of terms are used in the thesis in a sense which differs from their common use, or their use within another specific discursive context. In a discussion which employs both literary and psychoanalytic concepts and terminology, I differentiate the meanings of terms in common such as Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real by using upper-case initials to suggest the strictly psychoanalytic sense, and lower-case for the literary or 'common' sense.

There are a few terms which I use both in a sense which implies their dominant (or) phallocentric structuring, as well as without or specifically against that loading. The word 'nation' is left lower-case where it refers simply to the general concept or construct in its common understanding, or to a concept of nation which is inclusive of difference and heterogeneity; however, it is given an upper-case initial when I use it in the context of the argument which posits Nation as the dominant discourse of sameness or identity in relation to valorised principles or discourses. Similarly, the construction of the self which is isomorphic with phallocentric valorisations of autonomy and sameness (according to the phallic norm) is represented as Self.

The use of upper and lower case in the word 'other' is more complex. In psychoanalytic theory, the counterpart of the self in the mirror/colonial encounter is the (lower-case) other. The position of the Symbolic Father, the socio-Symbolic Law, language, the unconscious, the third term which intervenes in the mother-infant dyad, are all represented by or as the (upper-case) Other. While conforming to these conventions, I most frequently refer to the Other in the context and sense of 'Nation's Others'.

This formulation refers to the other (of the colonial/mirror encounter) repressed to, and returned from the 'National unconscious' -- that is, the internal heterogeneity that the dominant discourse of Nation must exclude in order to articulate itself in unified terms -- as *identities*. Thus, in post-colonialism, discourses of indigeneity, the feminine, and so on are both the mirror-other of Nation, and are articulated through their constitution by the National Symbolic order, signifying their alienation from themselves (through the Other of language and the unconscious) and from the Self (as other). In short, they are constituted through the National unconscious (the Other), and are articulated through language (the Other), and therefore are Nation's Others.

I also employ the unusual form of (M)Other for 'Empire'. The more usual form for representing the mother in relation to the infant would be (M)other, the small 'o' signifying the mother as the counterpart in the mirror relation -- the infant's first 'other'. However, my intention is both to evoke this meaning and to suggest the imperial Law represented in and by this 'mother' -- the Other as the Law, the 'phallic' (M)Other of colonial phantasy.

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Notes.

- 1 Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), p. xi.
- 2 Simon During, "Postmodernism or postcolonialism today," *Textual Practice* 1, No. 1, (1987), p. 35.
- 3 Sally Herbert Frankel, *The Concept of Colonization* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 7.
- 4 Robert Strausz-Hupé and Harry Hazard (eds), *The Idea of Colonialism* (The Foreign Policy Research Institute, University of Pennsylvania, 1958), p. 432.
- 5 Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, cited in Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978; Vintage Books Edition, 1979), p. 219.
- 6 Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: Anansi, 1972), pp. 35-6.
- 7 Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.1.
- 8 C. Manning Clark, *A Short History of Australia* (London: Heinemann, 1964), p. 16. It must be emphasised in relation to historical discourse of the 'positivist' school that its purpose in this thesis is not to provide 'historical background' but to exemplify a range of discourses which construct as they reflect 'knowledges'.
- 9 Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959; revised 1969), pp. 64, 37.
- 10 Norman Macdonald, *Canada: Immigration and Colonisation: 1841-1903* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1966), p. 22.
- 11 Sinclair, p. 62.
- 12 Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *boundary 2*, 12, No. 3; 13, No. 1 (1984), p. 333.
- 13 Mohanty, p. 333.
- 14 Frankel, p. 10.
- 15 Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Critical Fanonism," *Critical Inquiry* 17, No. 3 (1991), p. 462.
- 16 Helen Tiffin discusses the problems of a nationally-based criticism of post-colonial texts in her "Commonwealth Literature and Comparative Methodology," *World Literature Written in English*, 23, No. 1 (1984), pp. 26-30. She points out that a national approach can "evaluate works in the light of biases and prejudices to which establishing traditions, eager to consolidate new cultural and literary 'norms,' can be prone. . . . Sometimes the national models are not only restrictive in their orthodoxies, but misleading in their claims to distinctiveness. A wider view shows that some cherished national phenomena are actually aspects of a shared post-colonial consciousness" (28).

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- 17 Hodge and Mishra, p. ix.
  - 18 Hodge and Mishra, p. xi.
  - 19 Stan Anson, "The Postcolonial Fiction," *Arena* 96 (1991), p. 66.
  - 20 David Bennet and Julie Stephens, "Post-Colonial Critique," *Arena* 96 (1991), p. 6.
  - 21 Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 2; my emphasis.
  - 22 Robert Young, "Psychoanalysis and Political Literary Theories", in James Donald (ed), *Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory: Thresholds* (Basingstoke and London: MacMillan, 1991), p. 155.
  - 23 Robert Young, p. 155; my emphasis.
  - 24 Gates, Jr., p. 470.
  - 25 Gates, Jr., "Critical Fanonism," p. 458. Gates points to the originary irruption of Lacan into colonial discourse in Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks* ("Critical Fanonism," p. 461).
  - 26 James Donald, "Thresholds: Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory," in *Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory: Thresholds*, p. 3.
  - 27 Young, p. 154.
  - 28 Donald, p. 3
  - 29 Donald, p. 2.
  - 30 Young, p. 140.
  - 31 Elizabeth Grosz, "Feminism and Anti-Humanism," in Andrew Milner and Chris Worth (eds), *Discourse and Difference*, (Clayton, Victoria: Centre for General and Comparative Literature, Monash University, 1990), p. 71.
  - 32 Jane Gallop, *Thinking Through the Body* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 31.
  - 33 Andrew Milner and Chris Worth, "Introduction," in Milner and Worth (eds), p. xiv.
  - 34 Homi K. Bhabha, in "The Postcolonial Critic: Homi Bhabha Interviewed by David Bennett and Terry Collits," *Arena* 96 (1991), pp. 61-2.
  - 35 Philipa Rothfield, "New Wave Feminism: Feminism and Postmodernism," in Milner and Worth (eds), p. 99.

## CHAPTER ONE

### (DIS)PLACING THE SUBJECT OF POST-COLONIAL DISCOURSE.

#### 1. I. Introduction.

The emergence of a culture into post-colonialism is generally posited in terms of a dominantly linear model of historical and cultural 'development' from the colonial beginning.<sup>1</sup> However, there is less agreement about what follows the 'colonial' stage. Such judgements are bound up with a network of historical, political, cultural and literary assumptions, informing the views of specific commentators. While it would be correct in politico-legal terms to regard colonialism as followed simply by post-colonialism, such a view encourages a reductive view of the complexity of cultural impulses and forms generated by colonialism. It underlies assertions that post-colonialism announces the concern with national identity and the production of cultural objects (such as 'post-colonial fiction') to foster and embody this.<sup>2</sup> 'Post-colonial' thus suggests a 'decolonising' political and cultural impulse. However, if 'nationalism' is specified as a stage between colonialism and post-colonialism, some important issues which otherwise could have been obscured, may be addressed. Indeed, nationalism has been situated as a stage between colonialism and post-colonialism in discussions of the literary 'development' of Australia and New Zealand, as the impulse underlying the search in literature for, or construction through literature of, national identity. However it is more useful to transform the term 'stage' from a temporal (linear) to a spatial metaphor, so that the categories are not seen as mutually exclusive, nor as expressive of a uni-directional linear "progression," but as co-existing, intersecting, and reflecting back on each other; in short, as inter-acting.<sup>3</sup>

Nationalism, as the impulse to specify the identity and character of particular colonies was, at various times an important feature of colonial New Zealand, Australian, and Canadian culture. In fact, nationalism necessarily precedes the politico-legal status of nation as its motivating sentiment and ideology. At the same time, the specification of nationalism as a 'stage' upon which the transformation from colonialism to post-colonialism is played out allows for the subsequent

problematism, in post-colonialism, of that response to Empire, thus extending beyond the implied closure of the colony-to-nation historical account.<sup>4</sup> In this way, nationalism remains as a floating middle term able to reach back to colonialism in its impulses, and as implicated in the post-colonial responses it has generated. Indeed, the persistence of nationalism into post-colonialism has produced many of the important literary tensions addressed by this thesis. Therefore, while some of the rationales underpinning Empire are addressed and critiqued in this first chapter, it takes as its beginning point the construct of Nation, reaching back to colonialism and forward to post-colonialism in consideration of issues which frequently relate to all three in a play of discursive mirrors and reflected identities.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish an ontological and discursive link between 'Nation' and 'self', such that they are more than analogous or parallel, but actually interdependent constructs. Further, these constructs may be understood through a psychoanalytic account of the entry into subjectivity. An historical coincidence of the emergence of the colonial nationalisms discussed in this thesis, and the rise of scientific discourses of organicism which sometimes linked themselves specifically to the project of nationhood, may be cited: Suzanne Zeller refers, in a study of early Victorian science and its role in the idea of Canada as a transcontinental nation, to a book review published in the *Canadian Naturalist and Geologist* in 1858 which expressed the view that "the destiny of British North America appeared subject to the same natural laws which guided every living organism."<sup>5</sup> She goes on to point out that "The concept of nationality . . . [became] increasingly racially oriented by the late nineteenth century. The nation-state replaced the state as the object of loyalty, while the nation was increasingly personified and idealized as 'a huge collective self.'"<sup>6</sup> At the same time, 'evolutionism' has been described as "an explanatory principle common to most nineteenth-century social thinkers," and the evolutionism of the 'New Liberals'

placed less importance on the principle of natural selection, which was more consistent with the older individualism, and more on the evolution of whole societies, on the growing dominance of 'mind' in social life. Society moved to higher and higher stages, ethically and in terms of its organisation, as the faculty of Reason . . . asserted its dominance over chaos and the 'baser' human motives.<sup>7</sup>

Psychoanalysis as theory and practice, became arguably the prototype of these sciences of the 'self', and, both deriving strength from and strengthening capitalism and liberal individualism, this individualism understood as the "divorce of the formally free individual from his or her class position [which] leads all sociological explanations back to concepts about individuals and the nature of their subjectivity. Social structures are understood as systems of inter-subjectivity."<sup>8</sup> These convergences point to the relevance of a psychoanalytic interpretation of the emergence of nations.

The link between Nation and 'self' is initially found in historical discourse concerning the emergence from colony into nationhood of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Britain, as Empire, is imaged as 'Mother', while the colonies constitute 'daughters' understood politically, economically and culturally in terms of their status as extensions of, and with differences from and similarities to, and dependence on and loyalty to, Britain/Empire. Such imagery serves to naturalise both the imperial-colonial relation, and the eventual nationhood of Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Referring to the prevalence of the vocabularies of kinship and home in discourses of nation, Benedict Anderson argues that

Both idioms denote something to which one is naturally tied. . . . [I]n everything 'natural' there is always something unchosen. In this way, nation-ness is assimilated to skin colour, gender, parentage, and birth-era -- all those things one can not help. . . . [P]recisely because such ties are not chosen, they have about them a halo of disinterestedness.<sup>9</sup>

However, the will to naturalisation effaces its own cultural construction; specifically that it is a gendered discourse which reinscribes patriarchal gender-identities and family structures and relations, relations which although "traditionally . . . conceived as the domain of disinterested love and solidarity," have more recently been analysed in terms of "family-as-articulated-power-structure."<sup>10</sup> When the colonies are seen in terms of similarity to, and dependence on the Imperial Mother, they are gendered feminine; when seen in terms of rebellion, self-actualisation and independence they are imaged male. Thus while the nuclear family remains consistently the metaphor for imperial-colonial relations and emergent nationhood, it is a flexibly gendered discourse.

The very flexibility of gender can be found in the inconsistencies and impasses produced by Freudian psychoanalysis in its attempts to account for the passage of the girl into 'normal womanhood'. In a discourse which attributes *a priori* privilege to masculinity in the phallogentric model of subjectivity, girls face difficult and ultimately ambivalent passages to mature womanhood. This culminates in Freud's uncertainty as to whether they ever fully resolve the Oedipal complex, and his description of their less assured place within the symbolic order of subjectivity. However, it is not a question of rejecting this analysis and its applicability to the processes of development from colonial status to sovereign nationhood, because of its phallogentrism. Instead, it is useful to accept its accuracy as an account of the constitution of the (male) subject under patriarchy, and thus to discover the isomorphism of the patriarchal male 'self' and Nation, and its basis in the repression-oppression of the feminine-difference, both culturally determined facts. It should therefore be clear also that it is certainly not a matter of exchanging the terms of privilege within the same binary model so that that which is currently feminine becomes the privileged term. This would require, for example, the recuperation of Empire (Mother) -- a clearly problematic implication. It is the morphology which must be dismantled, freeing the currently contained 'masculine' and 'feminine' terms from binary polarisation.

In his return to the theories of Freud, psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan contributed the postulate of the 'mirror stage' as an account of the infant's psychical development towards active subjectivity. According to Lacan, the infant initially experiences its body as a fragmented collection of drives and impulses, satisfied by and therefore combined in Imaginary wholeness with the mother. It does not yet differentiate its own body from its mother's. Indeed, it is not until the advent of the 'mirror stage', when the infant perceives its image in a mirror that it has a sense of its own body at all. The perception of its image serves to unify the body into a whole and unique entity, separate from the mother. However, the paradox is that the image both provides the basis for the genesis of the ego, and institutes a distance between the child's 'sense' of itself and the image of itself with which it identifies *as* itself. In other words, the recognition of its whole and unique body occurs at the expense of Imaginary wholeness or plenitude by splitting the self into perceiver and perceived, the latter being an inaccessible image in the mirror. As Lemaire has stated, "Disguised as a deceptive access to the instance of the total corporeal 'I', as distinct from



the background, this stage is in fact only the first step in human alienation."<sup>11</sup> The child thus sees an 'other' who is at the same time itself. Further, this identification requires the repression of the multiplicity of sensations and drives which had been experienced in their immediacy. It is because the child both identifies with its other (its image), and is the rival of its (distanced) other -- identifying with it meaning wanting to take its place -- that the mirror stage is both the precondition of primary narcissism, and "owing to the irreducible gap which it opens between the infant and its fellows, the very source of human aggressivity."<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Lacan teaches that these two drives are inextricably associated. With the mirror stage the child has entered the Imaginary order of unmediated dual relations between 'self' and 'other':

The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation -- and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic -- and lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development.<sup>13</sup>

The introduction of a third term -- the Other -- to the dual relationships which characterise the Imaginary leads the child from the Imaginary into the Symbolic mode. As Wilden explains:

In Lacan's interpretation, perception is certainly primary in human existence, but it is the notion of the self, rather than that of subjectivity which perception generates. The child's release from this alienating image, if indeed he is released from it, will occur through his discovery of subjectivity by his appropriation of language from the Other, which is his means of entry into the Symbolic order in the capacity of subject.<sup>14</sup>

The Symbolic is the order of language, the social, the Law-of-the-Father, and is actualised with the resolution of the Oedipus complex. The Oedipal stage is that governed by the Phallus, the Law which forbids the child (sexual) access to the mother, and where repression into the unconscious of that (sexual) desire for the mother is exchanged for possession of the Phallus and a place in the Symbolic order as a subject. It is with the introduction of this third term that a system of exchange can exist, where the Phallus is the term exchanged between self and other, and a relation of social communication can exist. The Symbolic is therefore the site of the mediation of language in the only partly successful attempt to traverse the

distance between, or repair the fragmentation of self and (m)other/image; it is the site of the formation of systems of substitutes and equivalences which enable the subject to mediate the desire arising from the lost unity with, or the perception of the absence of, the (m)other. The only partial satisfaction of this desire ensures the continuation -- through the chain of substitute-signifiers -- of language. In other words, in the Symbolic order, "language mediates (and, once again, alienates) the subject's desire."<sup>15</sup> Therefore subjectivity is actualised through the Oedipal stage, in which the child exchanges the dual relation with the mother for language and a place in the Symbolic order.

The centrality accorded to language in the attainment of subjectivity can also be paralleled with the place of language in the constitution of nationhood and nationality. Just as the 'centre' of the subject is shown by Lacan not to be embedded in some essence of the individual, but in the Symbolic order of language to which it (in a state of fundamental alienation) accedes, Anderson further argues that "If nationalness has about it an aura of fatality, it is nonetheless a fatality embedded in history . . . [F]rom the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood."<sup>16</sup> Thus the constitution of nation -- like subjectivity -- in language is an idea of central importance to this thesis.

## 1. II. Empire as (M)Other.

'Nation' is an idea that is constituted against an Other, and in a post-colonial analysis of the beginnings of 'new' nations with the process of decolonisation, that Other is, if not solely then initially or most immediately, 'Empire'. However, in the case of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, Empire -- Britain -- was only ever ambivalently Other. Expression of the colonial relationship to Britain has, over time, included similarities, dependence and loyalty, which have continually interacted with perceptions of difference, the drive to independence and the weakening of loyalty. Indeed, it can be shown the inter-relationship of these factors has functioned to preserve a relative balance of them in the constitution of Australian, Canadian and New Zealand nationalisms: differences and independences fuelled loyalties as much as similarities; similarities 'justified' independence, and so on. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the presence and relative importance of such factors has always varied considerably between the three nations, and other factors

have been influential. What follows is therefore not an 'historical' account, in the traditional sense, of the emergences of Australia, Canada and New Zealand into nationhood.<sup>17</sup> Instead, it is an examination of the influences and implications of certain discursive patterns upon the construction and problematisation of national 'identities'. When I refer to Australia, Canada, and New Zealand in this and any other context, my own argument will show that I am employing synecdoche -- the part perhaps best rendered as 'the dominant discourse within' or 'those who use their power to speak for or about' Australia, Canada, or New Zealand.

1. II. (i). **Colonies as extensions of Empire.** Initially, the colonies of Australia, Canada and New Zealand were defined principally in relation to Britain, as extensions of Empire, even of Britain itself. The notion of colonies as extensions evokes the undifferentiated bodies of mother and infant in pre-Imaginary space. Similarities included the perception of racial co-terminosity, a population composed of the same racial type -- the Anglo-Saxon. This perception, of course, depended on the disregard of the indigenous populations as either not 'there', which owing to wars and diseases was increasingly the case,<sup>18</sup> or as not part of the colonies' populations.<sup>19</sup> In this sense the colonies were increasingly something like literal extensions of Britain. However, in another sense they embodied the extension of an *idea* of Britain, one which reached back to a lost British past for values and principles to be transposed on to colonial lands. In terms of the psychoanalytic model of evolving subjectivity, this nostalgia is evocative of the nostalgia for the lost mother which conditions men's relationships with women as 'sons' to 'mother-substitutes', and even more so the functioning of the super-ego set up as heir to the Oedipus complex, which

presides, Freud writes, over the formation of ideals, over the moral conscience and self-observation . . . . Better than *a* mother, then, is the working out of the *idea of the mother*, of the *maternal ideal*. Better to transform the real "natural" mother into an ideal of the maternal function which no-one can ever take away from you.<sup>20</sup>

Thus responses to the colonies by those British settlers who had been separated from the Imperial Mother-land were characterised by nostalgia for the Imaginary space of unmediated relation between the self and the Mother. British philosopher J.N. Findlay claimed that the "'visionary and idealized England which absorbs the emotional energies of New Zealand . .

. keeps it permanently in a state of feeble-mindedness and infantilism."<sup>21</sup> Emigration and settlement was often founded on the belief that the ideal values of the Old World, such as ownership of land as measure and guarantee of economic independence and social prestige, would be a reality in the New World for all regardless of class.<sup>22</sup> In the philosophy of his 'systematic colonisation', E. G. Wakefield "looked back to a legendary past, to the squire surrounded by his contented cap-tipping yokels."<sup>23</sup> In a similar vein, emigration propagandist Samuel Sidney envisaged the recreation in Australia of a lost British past: "every striving man who rears a race of industrious children . . . living on his own land, looking down to the valleys to his herds -- towards the hills to his flocks, amid the humming of bees."<sup>24</sup> Thus the establishment and settlement of pastoral or rural colonies in Australia, Canada and New Zealand pandered to nostalgia for an idealised image of pre-industrial Britain's environment and social order. However, the notions of colonial similarity and colonies as extensions of Britain did not evoke any idea of the equal status of the colonies. The discourse emphasised less colonial *affiliation* than *filiation*. Keith Sinclair states that "Wakefield has fostered the idea, which rapidly became a myth, that New Zealand was . . . created as nearly in the image of the motherland as could be expected."<sup>25</sup> It has been said that "Ever since the late nineteenth century, New Zealand has commonly been considered the most dutiful of Britain's daughters."<sup>26</sup> Indeed, such discourse, complicit as it was with the notion of filial ties to Britain, went further to posit the naturalness of links to Britain. In 1888, Canadian politician George Parkin emphasised the 'naturalness' of links with Britain as opposed to the 'unnaturalness' of annexation to America in extremely affective discourse. Deploring the 'murderous' disavowal, "deliberately, in cold blood" of Canadians' "devoted regard for a mother land with which they are connected by a thousand ties of affectionate sympathy," he argues that, "In Great Britain reorganized as a federation, or union, or alliance, Canada would hold an honourable place, gained on lines of true national development; in annexation to the United States she could have nothing but a bastard nationality, the off-spring of either meanness, selfishness, or fear."<sup>27</sup> Further, colonial expressions of the terms of loyalty to Britain have also emphasised allegiance in the face of acknowledged political and cultural difference from Britain and the other colonies. This has been argued in relation to Canadian Confederation:

The framework of union was the over-riding British allegiance, which threw the colonies together in a potentially hostile world . . . . Here were men drawn together not because of the common social traditions, which in the case of some of them were closer with the Americans than with their fellow colonials, but because of a common political loyalty . . . . Confederation was not a matter of official British despatches, but of the British memories in the hearts of the colonists - a tribute to the force of history.<sup>28</sup>

The colonial relationship was therefore one of loyalty to Britain itself, enacted in the development of British-defined and British-controlled institutions of government and civil and social organisation. It was also a relationship of cultural and ideological dependence, and dependence for both economic and defence well-being. Thus the similarity tended to be expressed in terms of a filial relationship.

1. II. (ii). **Dependence and Disappointments.** The dependence of the colonies on Britain has been portrayed by historians, politicians, and writers and critics of fiction in terms of the dependence of a child on an adult, although it could be said that Britain and the colonies did not share similar views of this dependence. Arthur Lower claims that from the 1840s, Britain saw the British North American colonies principally as markets, potential customers for its goods, empty lands, or strategic areas. As a result, "in England there was virtually no-one who had the same sentimental attitude towards the colonies. . . as had the average colonist towards the mother-country. . . . The bonds of Empire down until the twentieth century were knit up almost exclusively by the colonists."<sup>29</sup> In fact, novelist Eleanor Dark portrayed the British view of Australian colonial dependence in the unflattering terms of a "troublesome, undisciplined infant" of whose needs and demands Britain would be relieved to be rid, particularly as its characteristics approached those of rebellious adolescence:

It was a peculiar colony, persistently claiming the notice of English Ministers . . . . It struggled, it quarrelled, it starved, it recovered to struggle and quarrel again . . . . Never a Governor's despatch arrived which was not loaded with requests . . . food, stores, stoves, kettles, tubs, ploughs, lanthorns, handcuffs, leg-irons, paper, paint, candles . . . and still it went on struggling, muddling, working, idling, rebelling, quarrelling, drinking -- a distant, uncouth, unpredictable, unresponsive land.<sup>30</sup>

The colonial relationship was one of dependence in economic, defence, domestic and cultural matters and the necessary separation between colony and imperial centre in anticipation of colonial nationalism was effected more by disappointments than by ideological rebellion. The New Zealand government during the 1860s to 1880s hoped for British supplies of troops and money towards the struggle with Maori for control of the North Island. Subsequent tensions with Britain were more the result of its indifference to, rather than interference in, New Zealand affairs. Similarly, economic links between New Zealand and Britain have been characterised by the same dependence and later sense of abandonment, culminating in Britain's entry into the European Economic Community in 1973.<sup>31</sup> Northrop Frye describes the British attitude toward Canadian interests in the nineteenth century as "flaccid. . . from the Treaty of Ghent in 1814 through all the nineteenth century boundary disputes" and resulting in "a strong sense of [Canada's] not getting the support it needed."<sup>32</sup> To some extent this lack of support related to Britain's cognisance of its own interests in the matter of British North American independence -- the opportunity to "reduce, or eliminate, the cost of governing the dependencies."<sup>33</sup> From an Australian perspective it has similarly been argued that "the invocation of imperial interests was always a two-edged sword, in the sense that, if they were invoked by Australians in their own interests, they could also be invoked by the British government, whose concept of imperial interests would, in the last resort, be that which prevailed."<sup>34</sup> Thus, the economic, political and defence interests of Australia and the other dominions depended for support upon compatibility with the interests and priorities of Britain itself. Nevertheless, in such cases the expression of the wish or need for such support only tended to emphasise further the belief in the desirability, even 'naturalness' of Australian, Canadian and New Zealand links with Britain, whether in terms of dependence or the desire for a fully recognised partnership: "Australia did not denounce Britain for having failed to protect its interests. It complained, it is true, but that led to no sentiment for separation from the parent."<sup>35</sup>

**1. II. (iii). Colonial Comparisons to Britain and America.** The colonies were defined both by their similarities to and differences from Britain, both of which were included or co-existed, not necessarily peacefully, in the defining principle of the relationship between the colonies and Britain -- simply that the former were 'colonial'. Differences were expressed in

terms of a focus on the status of colony itself, one which resulted in comparisons with America, the most advanced colony. However, there was a tendency for Britain and America to be defined against each other, so that their respective qualities represented nothing so much as each others' opposites, in the same way that phallogentric subjectivity polarises the sexes into opposites in which 'woman' is the negation of 'man'. Among nineteenth century perceptions of Australia was the belief that, "the less it was like Britain, the more it was like the United States, and vice versa."<sup>36</sup> Similarly, it has been argued that

Upper Canadians . . . saw much to admire south of the border, as well as much to abhor. Anti-Americanism remained powerful; however, Upper Canada was as much a colony of the United States as it was of Great Britain, and its search for identity, its developing ideology, above all the emerging conflict between Tories and Reformers, can only be understood in terms of a debate with two major reference points -- Britain and the United States -- rather than one.<sup>37</sup>

Conversely, differentiation from America repositioned colonies in closer relation to Britain. In the case of Canada, the American-Canadian war of 1812 has been described as having served precisely this function:

The most important aftermath of the war lay not in the boundaries but in psychological effects . . . . The conflict strengthened the sentiment of Anti-Britishism, on which the American nationality had been founded, and caused the courses of the two nations to deviate more widely . . . . It accentuated Upper Canada's dominant hatred, whose incidence it changed slightly from hatred of 'republicanism' to hatred of 'the Americans' or 'the damn Yankees'.<sup>38</sup>

Thus America served as a third term between the colonies and Britain, the term occupied in psychoanalytic theory by the figure of the Symbolic Father. It is the mediation of this third term which fractures Imaginary duality between mother and infant, and instigates Symbolic subjectivity. The perception of the phallus of the Father leads to the son's identification of his own body with that of the Father, rather than with the 'castrated' Mother, while the girl, herself identifying with the Mother's 'lack', will take the Father's phallus as the object of her desire. However, as well as embodying features of the Father-function, America, when serving comparatively as the most advanced colony is placed more in the role of older brother to the colonies. Frederick Philip Grove actually employed

something like this image, located in the discourse of family relations in his comparison of Canada and America:

Canada and the United States are of pretty much the same age. But even in individual families we find the quick, brilliant boy side by side with the slow plodding one; and not always is it the quick brilliant boy who remains at the end to show the world what stock he came from. Too often he is the prodigal son.

Thus, with her neighbour and brother growing faster and faster, Canada has slowly, slowly grown up within that neighbour's shadow. The two have lived in comparative outward peace, involved only now and then in those brawls which are the flaws in the history of Europe.<sup>39</sup>

Admittedly there is a curious gender change for Canada in the second paragraph, relocating Canada in the more frequently feminine colonial imagery, while family relations briefly give way to neighbours. However, reference to history's "brawls" nicely evokes the sibling relationship. More importantly, however, there is a basis in psychoanalytic theory for the ambiguous Father-brother imaging of America. Luce Irigaray explains:

If man remains fixated on his first love object, his mother, throughout his life, what will be his wife's role in his sexual economy? . . . If in order to correspond to man's desire, woman must play the part of or identify with his mother, he will be in some sense the *brother* of his children, since he has the same (type of) love object: the maternal.<sup>40</sup>

Comparisons with America evoked the same degree of ambivalence as, and in fact were integrally linked with, comparisons with Britain. When America was seen in terms of its relative advancement, comparisons were expressed in terms of envy and even resentment. Norman Macdonald states that from 1791 to 1815, "travellers frequently remarked on the comparative backwardness of the social and economic life in the British North American Colonies, and the remarkable development of corresponding sections of the United States."<sup>41</sup> Lower remarks that some time before Confederation, the name 'British North America' gained more than geographical meaning, and served to differentiate it from the other American community: "As Durham noted, the pace of life was less rapid and sure, the tone of life less exuberant and less generous than in the republic . . . . The mere presence of 'The States' continuously thrust a painful contrast on men's notice, intensifying every grievance."<sup>42</sup> In psychoanalytic terms, America has the phallus, and the resentful daughter



must identify with Britain. Nevertheless, envy was not the only response generated in the 'daughter' colonies by the relative advancement of America. Grove's comparison between Canada and America cited above is certainly at least ambivalent. He calls more directly for a favourable Canadian self-image (while retaining the terms of the comparison) when he states that "the Canadian travelling in the United States is still recognized as a Canadian. They call us slow. Let us glory in that epithet."<sup>43</sup>

Sometimes comparisons with America were positive. Specific similarities between Australia and America included the most general perceptions of their shared liberalism and federalism, contained in claims that, for example, "The American influence contributed peripherally to the climate of liberal opinion which influenced the framing of Australian State constitutions in the [eighteen-] fifties," and that "American ideas exercised a marginal influence on the Australian labour movement but had a more direct impact on Australian federation and the framing of the federal constitution."<sup>44</sup>

However, as has already been mentioned, the terms of difference from Britain also emphasised the colonial status itself. The colonies were likened to America in their 'new'-ness. For example, Australia was variously referred to as "'another America', a 'new America', 'the America of the South', 'the Future America', 'a humble imitation of the United States,'" among others.<sup>45</sup> Colonial 'new-ness' was, however, an ambiguous term. It could signal superiority, when, like America, it was associated with escape from poor conditions in the 'Old World' and fresh opportunities in the 'New World'. However, Wakefield's term, 'New People', as a description of the 'Americanised' character, and as applied to those in Australian and Canadian settlements, was in no sense a complimentary description. They were

'a people who, though they continually increase in number, make no progress in the art of living; who, in respect to wealth, knowledge, skill, taste, and whatever belongs to civilisation, have degenerated from their ancestors; . . . and who delight in a forced equality, not equality before the law only, but equality against nature and truth; an equality which, to keep the balance always even, rewards the mean rather than the great, and gives more honour to the vile than to the noble . . . . We mean, in two words, a people who become rotten before they are ripe.'<sup>46</sup>

By the 1850s it was also believed that New Zealand settlers "were already coming to resemble Wakefield's anathema, 'a new people' . . . . A visiting Frenchman thought insolence . . . was à la mode in New Zealand as was familiarity in America."<sup>47</sup> Such comparisons frequently functioned to assert the superiority of 'British' characteristics and colonial links with Britain. Rudyard Kipling, an apologist for Empire, observed of the Canadian-American border that, "'Always the marvel . . . was that on one side of an imaginary line should be Safety, Law, Honour, and Obedience, and on the other frank, brutal decivilisation.'"<sup>48</sup>

On the other hand, Thomas Cholmondeley believed that the characteristics regarded as 'American' were rather the characteristics of the British colonist: "The American is essentially a colonist, and his ways and doings express a habit of life, rough and ready, free and daring, generous but dangerous, of infinite suppleness, dexterity, and resource. He cannot be equalled for contrivance . . . ." <sup>49</sup> To be 'colonial' was to be inferior when it meant being a 'raw', 'distant' cultural outpost of Britain and Europe. However, the colonies were also associated with the strength and vigour both necessary to and produced by pioneering conditions. Indeed, from a current post-colonial perspective, to be 'colonised' is an expression of being the victim of imperialism; for the indigenous peoples it refers to the dispossession of land and destruction of culture, and for the post-colonisers it refers to a sense of dislocation from or deprivation of a European belonging and inheritance. However, in colonial discourse to be 'colonised' was not necessarily the expression of being victims of imperialism. An early New Zealand meaning of being 'colonised' as having learnt to endure pioneering conditions, can be found in Alexander Bathgate's novel *Waitaruna* (1881), in which a recent arrival from Britain to New Zealand is chided, "'Though you are not so green as many 'new chums' . . . you are not sufficiently colonised yet to be satisfied with carrying a toothbrush and a paper collar as sufficient baggage for a week.'" <sup>50</sup>

In defining the colonies, whether against Britain and/or America, or against each other, there was an inevitable tendency to specification of colonial identity for each. The terms of colonial identity, of course, were not initially 'national', but were variously 'newness', racial, or simply the mere fact of being 'colonial'.<sup>51</sup> In the loosening of ties to Britain, there was an increased focus by the colonies on their own identity. Early Australian immigrants wished to define the colony against the English

image of the 'convict hell', and did so by fostering the distinction between "being convict (and British) and being Australian." In this spirit, "Writers such as Marcus Clarke and Price Warung condemned the brutality of the system, rather than the depravity of the convicts, and for them this reflected on the morality, not of Australia, but of England."<sup>52</sup> Further, the qualities which manifested themselves in service to Britain were taken to represent the qualities of the individual colonies themselves, not simply the state of being colonial, culminating in assertions of nationhood. In fact, it could be argued that the pursuit of a national 'self' or identity increasingly focused not on differentiation from Britain or even America, but on differentiation from the other colonies and later dominions. Certainly, it has been shown that Canadian identity was formed very much in distinction from American, but in a comparable way, New Zealand identity was differentiated from Australian. This was influenced both by proximity and by a similar threat of absorption of New Zealand into the Australian Federation. According to Sinclair, New Zealanders' "feeling that they were not Australian was a major influence on the growth of national sentiment. Australians tended to define themselves as non-British. By seeing themselves as 'non-Aus', New Zealanders could continue to feel both New Zealanders and Britons."<sup>53</sup> There was therefore a tendency to specification of colonial identity itself in drawing comparisons with Britain and America. Further, while the colonies were defined in this sense against England, the qualities of putative superiority were loyally put to Britain's service. Much later, however, the strength or significance of links to Britain through the Commonwealth changed. An Australian commentator has declared of the 1970s that "there are other countries than Britain in the Commonwealth that makes it useful to Australia . . . ; this is the major contrast with earlier decades, when the presence of others detracted, if anything from the utility of the Commonwealth as a means of influencing Britain to pursue Australian interests."<sup>54</sup>

Colonial differentiation from America was therefore expressed in two rather different ways: the difference from America itself, or Americans, and the difference from the political ideologies -- democracy, republicanism -- associated with post-1812 America. This resulted in two slightly different, though continually inter-related reassertions of loyalty from the colonies: loyalty to Britain, and loyalty to the principles of Empire. While loyalty to Britain was expressed through the perpetuation

of British cultural institutions and the sense of a 'racial' coterminosity, loyalty to Empire was more like the implication of the daughter in the perpetuation of patriarchy.

1. II. (iv). **Loyalty to Empire.** In historical and ideological loyalty to Empire, the colonies demonstrated a willingness to put pioneering qualities to the military and domestic service of Britain, in return for defence and the ability to bathe "in the reflected glory of empire," and "saw themselves as proof of the fitness of the British race to govern the world."<sup>55</sup> Indeed, such ideology informed much of the New Zealand dissatisfaction with Britain's failure to become involved in the 1860s 'Maori Wars'. Sinclair states that, in contradistinction to the British view that the matter was a 'domestic' New Zealand one, "to the settlers it seemed that they were fighting Britain's war, a war in the cause of Britain's civilising and colonising mission." The reasoning was that the settlers "saw themselves as carrying on the British imperial mission."<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the belief in the principles of Empire was strengthened by the belief in the coterminosity of colonial 'self' and Empire.

Imperialism has not always been regarded as incompatible with nationalism in Australia, Canada and New Zealand. It has been claimed, for example, that "New Zealand originally owed her name for clinging to the motherland to the policy of her Government, from the eighteenth-nineties until the First World War, in supporting the campaign for imperial federation."<sup>57</sup> Similarly, in a discourse which evokes the perpetuation of the nuclear family down through the generations, it was claimed that "By 1944 Australia . . . had come of age with the plaudits of a generous Motherland. She had asserted her Dominion independence. She had proclaimed her intention of administering her own little Empire... "<sup>58</sup> Carl Berger has argued that "Canadian imperialism was one variety of Canadian nationalism," and that "When critics belaboured imperialism because of its hostility to 'Canadian nationalism' what they really meant was that they believed in [sic] incompatible with that kind of nationalism which they endorsed."<sup>59</sup> Similarly it has been argued that Australian nationalism of the 1880s was, "to a considerable extent . . . expressed through imperial institutions (even imperial symbols), rather than through denunciation of them."<sup>60</sup> However, another important factor in perpetuating the link was the lack of perception of exploitation by Empire (that is, among those whose perceptions 'counted'). There is an

ironic link between the belief that the '*decline*' of the British Empire through the steady granting of independence to the colonies, was due in large part to the Empire's own 'liberal' policies, and the way that these policies functioned to *strengthen* colonial and later 'Commonwealth' sentimental ties of loyalty. As a result of such 'liberalism', "The British provincials in general neither felt exploited nor desired to be liberated,"<sup>61</sup> because "To be a British subject never meant subjection in Canada."<sup>62</sup> Between 1848 and 1871, which saw the "development of Canadian nationhood from colonial self-government . . . to continental stature . . . [.] the colonial policy of the United Kingdom was liberal":

In general, that is, it looked to the day when the colonies of settlement, increased in strength and practised in self-government, would swing out into natural orbits of their own, attached still, it was hoped, by ties of allegiance and affection to the mother country.<sup>63</sup>

Such 'liberal' policies therefore emphasised sentiment as the basis of colonial allegiance to Britain, both in terms of what Britain hoped for, and what was asserted by the colonies themselves. Underneath this, independence was not simply easily achieved by the colonies, it was to some extent foisted upon them as consistent with British self-interest. Although Morton argues for the importance of the liberal principles of the British Empire in facilitating colonial independence, the implications of which will be clarified below, he also points out that British economic liberals "suspected the colonies of seeking to combine a maximum of self-government with a maximum of imperial aid."<sup>64</sup> However, it remained that colonial political reforms frequently strengthened the basis of links with Britain at the same time as preparing the way to national 'sovereignty'. For example, the basis of Australian Federation and Canadian Confederation lay in the unification of the disparate colonies into whole entities which would acknowledge and continue their relationship with the Imperial (M)Other. Therefore, while both Australia and America have federal constitutions, the basis of these has been acknowledged as very different. Comparing the war of independence and subsequent civil war which attended and conditioned the development of the American nation, Cowen has pointed out, in naturalistic terms, that "No such drama attended the birth of Australian federation, nor has it faced any comparable threats." The discourse also suggested affective relations: the establishment of "closer constitutional bonds" between the Australian colonies and "the mother government."<sup>65</sup> Similarly, Morton

refers to Canadian reluctance to "sever the connection" with the United Kingdom. "They were, they protested, British in feeling and mode of government."<sup>66</sup> This loyalty was based on principles which could not have been more different from those of the American notion of the Imperial relationship. The basis of Canadian nationhood has been differentiated from that of America, in terms of what has been seen not only as opposing conditions of actualisation, but of a completely different notion of the imperial-colonial relationship: "In American belief, colonies . . . if not exploited and tyrannized over, were in constant danger of exploitation and tyranny." Where the American experience was articulated in discourse of imperialism and liberation, the Canadian discourse emphasised "national autonomy by evolution."<sup>67</sup>

The 'liberal' colonial policies of Britain meant that Australian, Canadian and New Zealand nationhood was eventually achieved by a (feminine) process of evolution to maturity, rather than rebellion which signalled the American entry into independent nationhood and gendered America as male within the Oedipal narrative.

As Freud himself noted, the girl remains in contiguity with the pre-oedipal period in ways that are barred for boys. For boys there is a singular and momentous break with the pre-oedipal and the maternal. The boy's first acts of repression must definitively separate him from the mother. In the case of the girl, there is no clear-cut division between the pre-oedipal and the oedipal; she occupies an oedipalised position only gradually and unsurely. Her oedipal complex may persist indefinitely or fade because of disappointments, rather than end through a dramatic repression.<sup>68</sup>

**1. II. (v). The Ambivalence of Colonial Nationalism: The Dutiful Daughter Announces Her Manhood.** Colonies whose independence has been secured by Act of Parliament rather than by a war of independence are more likely to retain ambivalent attitudes toward the former imperial centre, especially when the indigenous populations are sufficiently in the minority to allow the settler perception of the imperial connection to dominate cultural and political expression.

Certainly various disillusionments with Britain's failures of economic and defence support resulted in early pushes for colonial self-government. Richard White points out, in the case of Australia, that "From the 1820s, a number of issues -- freedom of the press, trial by jury, control of Crown Lands, the extension of self-government, opposition to transportation --

were framed in terms of conflict between the British government and colonial opinion."<sup>69</sup> Similarly, Malcolm McKinnon argues that there was "an early manifestation of New Zealand nationalism in the vocal and often intemperate agitation conducted by the settlers for the granting of representative institutions and a responsible government in general, and for control over land disposal in particular."<sup>70</sup> Northrop Frye has argued that apart from superficial expressions of loyalty, there was, in nineteenth century Canada, "much resentment, and a feeling that colonials would have been treated with more respect in London if, like Americans, they had represented an independent nation."<sup>71</sup>

However, self-government was not necessarily seen as complete independence from Britain. A New Zealand politician in 1890 depicted Britain as a kind of guardian angel in declaring that

'New Zealand should be a country for New Zealanders. With the wings of Great Britain over us we need look to no other country or colony for protection . . . [W]e are here the pioneers of a great nation, and shall, no doubt, have a glorious future . . . I think we shall become in every respect a country quite as great as Australia, and with a nationality of our own.'<sup>72</sup>

Of course the belief in, or wish for independence of Australia, Canada and New Zealand from Britain varied, and Sinclair refers to early twentieth century New Zealand politicians such as Ward and Seddon, who regarded the possibility of New Zealand defence independence as "wholly illusory," while Australians and Canadians wanted their own navies, and Canadians anticipated the pursuit of an independent foreign policy.<sup>73</sup>

On the other hand, expressions of desire for colonial independence create a tension within the metaphor of colonies as *daughters* of the Imperial (M)Other: within phallogocentric discourse it is hardly possible to image the independence and self-actualisation of the daughter:

Women take up a place in the symbolic order only as variants of men. In Freud's understanding, women take up a post-oedipal or symbolic position only in one of two ways: they can identify with men, acting and speaking as if there were no difference, in which case they suffer from what Freud calls the 'masculinity complex'; or they can accept their 'castration' and their 'inferiority' to men and accept a symbolic position only through the mediation of men.<sup>74</sup>

Neither of these options provides direct access for the daughter to an active place as subject within the Symbolic order. Therefore, 'Nation' as gendered discourse must exercise a flexibility so that when maturity is reached and sovereignty is attained, the images of nationhood necessarily become male.

Just as American rebellion in the form of the War of Independence is discursively consistent with America's imaging as male, so it is generally regarded as being in the competition and victory on the sportsfield, and more seriously in the Boer War and most importantly on the battlefields of Gallipoli that nationhood was 'earned' by Britain's colonies. Yet the images of competition, separation and warfare, as constitutive of the male Oedipal complex and its resolution are fundamentally compromised by the repression of the 'feminine'; in this case both the disavowal of the 'feminine' entry into mature nationhood, and the 'feminine' that is repressed in the phallogentric constitution of the male subject. In other words, while the boy separates more definitively than the girl from the mother during his Oedipal phase, repressing his own feminine and maternally connoted pleasures, during certain privileged moments, these repressed pleasures may return. Thus nostalgia for the mother is more, if not only, available to the son who has separated from the mother than the daughter who remains in touch with the maternal continent (and thus does not have the distance which generates nostalgia).

While the 'dutiful daughter' image expressed New Zealand's dependence on and loyalty to Britain, 'she' underwent a mysterious transformation when called upon to serve in war. As Jock Phillips puts it with regard to the Boer War, "feelings of duty to the imperial protector Britain, of blood loyalty to Anglo-Saxon kith and kin, and of personal obligations to mother and motherland . . . New Zealand, the *youngest son*, would show that it is reaching adulthood and could play a part in world destiny."<sup>75</sup> Thus masculinity formed the basis of the possibility of national independence or maturity. Sinclair points out that "W.P. Morrell, who in 1935 first interpreted the history of New Zealand as the growth of a nation, concluded that New Zealand announced its manhood to the world on the bloody slopes of Gallipoli in 1915."<sup>76</sup>

However, further examination of the underlying terms of this 'manhood' reveals a less conclusively independent 'nationhood'. It has



been said for example, that the Boer War had "awoken New Zealanders to their imperial responsibilities,"<sup>77</sup> while Britain's imperial wars provided the opportunity for "the new Australian type to face the test of nationhood" where some were so bold as to suggest that the new type was . . . a decided improvement on the old."<sup>78</sup> While Phillips argues that New Zealanders blamed British generals for the failure of the Gallipoli enterprise, there remains a component of nostalgia in the conclusion that "Though the New Zealanders often expressed a continuing love of England, there was little love for the men from the motherland."<sup>79</sup> These wars were fought with and for England/Empire, not against. Even on the sportsfield, arguably the site of sublimated or socially regulated nationalistic battles, it was claimed that Australian test victories over England from 1874 served as proof that the race was not degenerating under the Australian sun, and, in terms which emphasised connection with rather than competition against the English, the Australian players were seen as retaining "'the manhood and muscle of their English sires.'"<sup>80</sup> In a slightly different vein, New Zealand success against the English in the 1905 rugby test series was "proof of the superior strength and dexterity of the New Zealand men. . . . It was the country life, the lack of urban decadence which produced superior physical manhood. This was to be New Zealand's special contribution to the Empire and to the race."<sup>81</sup> Therefore, in various ways, nationhood/manhood was achieved without completely breaking ties to the Imperial (M)Other. In short, (M)Other was only ambivalently the Other of 'Nation'.

### 1. III. Nation as Sovereign Self.

'Nation' was therefore constituted as a process of 'maturation', rather than rebellion or separation based on perceptions of exploitation or fundamental difference. A 'national' lack of perception of exploitation facilitated the expression of the relationship between the colonies and later the nations within a discourse of 'filiation', encompassing extension, similarity, dependence and loyalty. As a result, in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, Empire has only ambivalently been the 'Other' of Nation. The expression of disappointment at failure of British support only emphasised further the belief in the relevance and propriety of such support, and the principles upon which it could be proffered. Perceptions of the nations as extensions of Empire, characterised by similarities to Britain, fuelled in part by lack of perception of exploitation, led to the

preservation of British political, legal, economic and cultural institutional forms and ties. But this very perception of lack of exploitation, and its expression from the point of view of "British provincials" points to the fundamental fact that the 'voice' of Nation 'against' Empire was constructed politically and ideologically, and suppressed what was, in the case of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, nation's more important 'Other' -- the heterogeneity within 'itself'.

In the mirror stage, the identification with the image in the mirror effects for the infant a sense of its body as whole and unique, a one-ness with boundaries, whose movements s/he can control, driving the 'excess', the multiplicity of sensations and impulses -- and thus possible other configurations of self -- into the unconscious. Now Benedict Anderson's description of the features of a nation can be seen to parallel those of the mirror-stage infant's body-image. He terms the nation a "limited sovereign community": "limited," in that "even the largest has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations;" "sovereign," in that "nations dream of being free, and if under God, directly so;" "community," such that "regardless of actual inequality and exploitation, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship."<sup>82</sup> Similarly, the infant's body is perceived as "limited" in the sense of having boundaries which separate or differentiate it from another body; "sovereign" in its ability to generate and largely control its own movements (although it may still be young enough to require parental or other support);<sup>83</sup> and finally "community" could be seen as the perception of itself as one -- horizontal - - 'self', as 'actual' difference is repressed and consigned to the unconscious.

With the oedipus complex and its resolution, the child assumes a place in the symbolic order by way of submission to the Law-of-the-Father (preventing incestuous relations with the mother), to enjoy the privileges of the Name-of-the-Father:

The oedipus complex severs the child from its dependence on the (m)other by means of the castration threat which pits the child's narcissistic investment in the integrity of its body against its desire for access to the mother's body. Only then can it gain a position within the socio-symbolic order, and the privileges associated with the Name-of-the-Father.<sup>84</sup>

Following from this, another parallel can be found between the separation from the 'maternal continent'<sup>85</sup> into 'male' nationhood/subjectivity, and

Anderson's explanation of the differences associated with the change from monarchies to nations. When he points out that "in the older imagining . . . states were defined by centres, borders were porous and indistinct and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another"<sup>86</sup> he evokes Irigaray's description of feminine fluidity, described by Grosz<sup>87</sup> as "a striking metaphor of the mother-daughter relationship":

it is continuous, compressible, dilatable, viscous, conductible, diffusable . . . it allows itself to be easily traversed by flow by virtue of its conductivity to currents coming from other fluids or exerting pressure through the walls of a solid; . . . it mixes with bodies of a like state, sometimes dilutes itself in them in an almost homogeneous manner, which makes the distinction between one and the other problematical.<sup>88</sup>

However, in a footnote to his point, Anderson argues that

Schoolchildren remember monarchs by their first names . . . , presidents by their last (names). In a world of citizens, all of whom are theoretically eligible for the presidency, the limited pool of 'Christian' names makes them inadequate as specifying designates. In monarchies, however, where rule is reserved for a single surname, it is necessarily 'Christian' names . . . that supply the requisite distinctions.<sup>89</sup>

While the significance of the subject's 'exchangeability' in the chain of signifiers -- the 'equality' of citizens in liberal democracies, for example, in relation to potential presidency -- will be elucidated further into the chapter, the concern to establish the 'last name', which in patriarchal, patrilineal societies amounts literally to the Name-of-the-Father, demonstrates the isomorphism of such nations and phallogocentric subjectivity.

Nationalism as been defined as "the set of ideas or policies which seeks to order aspects of human life around the nation, however defined,"<sup>90</sup> and perhaps more specifically as "primarily a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent."<sup>91</sup> However, as well as evoking something like body-and-mind congruity, 'nationalism' -- as 'idea', 'policy', 'principle' -- attains its 'materiality'<sup>92</sup> as discourse. Just as it is discourse which engenders the subject (subjectivity is attained with the entry into discourse), rather than the subject being the origin of discourse, so it is "nationalism which engenders nations and not the other way round."<sup>93</sup>

Two apparently contradictory bases for the emergence of nationalism have been identified. There is the nationalism which focuses upon liberation from some external or foreign ruling power (the nationalism associated with decolonisation), and the nationalism which focuses upon internal (national) unity. The former, an 'outward facing' nationalism has been described as typically the concern of the political 'left', while the latter, 'inward facing' nationalism is generally the focus of the political 'right'.<sup>94</sup> Although it will be demonstrated that this separation is ultimately an 'idealist' gesture, and that the one always tends towards, or even implies the other, in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where political and cultural dominance was quickly attained by the settlers, the process of political 'decolonisation' was effected by comparatively weak discourses of liberation. There was, therefore, a concomitant emphasis on the nationalism of internal unity, and the forging of 'national identity' through the *narcissistic* construction of images of the national self. It is relevant at this point to recall that the role of the mirror stage in the genesis of the ego turns upon the function of the gaze and the centrality of the image in the anticipation of subjectivity. Writing of Canadian national identity, Germaine Warkentin stated that descriptions of Canadian identity "have been worth something, but what they add up to is fragmented, indecipherable. With what are we to identify ourselves?" The problem, according to Warkentin, is that "Searchers for a Canadian identity have failed to realize that you can only have an identification with something you can see or recognize. You need, if nothing else, an image in a mirror."<sup>95</sup>

Indeed, the 'family romance' discursive paradigm has functioned to naturalise the political and ideological construct of Nation, so that humanistic concepts such as *identity* become applicable to the nation in the first place. Discourses of colonial filiation and independence as a process of gradual maturation have had a profound impact on the project of defining national identities, in explaining the almost obsessive nature of the search and the ways in which these identities are articulated.

When Nation is imaged as 'self', a unity is implied which has important consequences for the political and cultural expression of this nation/self. The Freudian psychoanalytic discourse of subjectivity, emerging out of the nineteenth-century liberal-humanist tradition, appears to cast the subject into the trajectory of such scientific and other

discourses of the individual as health and human development, morality, and spirituality. These have functioned to legitimise the synecdoche involved in speaking of 'nation', rather than specifying interests, ideologies, and conditions within nation which contrast or contradict. For example, Northrop Frye's reference to "Canada . . . or the place where Canada is,"<sup>96</sup> suggests that nation is not so much a *place*, as some spirit which inhabits a place. Nevertheless, while Frye's statement avoids the implication that Canada or any nation is essentially *there* in a geographical sense, there is another form of essentialism which dehistoricises Nation in the suggestion of a national 'spirit' which is the defining element. Such a national 'spirit' or spiritual embodiment of a national identity or culture, came to be referred to, in nineteenth and twentieth century Germany, as the *Volksgeist*, the spiritual aspect of a people which constitutes the (national) culture.<sup>97</sup> This view however promotes the notion of culture as "not just the spiritual 'driving force' of a society, but [as] intimately or *organically* related to its members in much the same way that *the human mind is related to the human body*."<sup>98</sup>

There are two important and related points to be drawn from this view of culture, which may, though does not necessarily, mean a national culture. First, the prevalent organic metaphors constructing naturalistic accounts of national or cultural development imply, as has been argued, certain specific ideological perspectives. Such metaphors are certainly ubiquitous in historians' accounts of the change of political status from colony to nation, and changes in relationships to imperial centres. But they also promote an essentialist view of Nation and national identity. Similarly, there is a teleological kind of reasoning which links identity and maturity. Such reasoning either posits 'identity' as something located in the future, to be achieved, or looks backwards from the standpoint of 'maturity' so that phenomena, cultural and otherwise, which derive from before 'maturity' are somehow inauthentic, or non-identical with 'identity'. Implications of this include the notion that as organic constructs, cultures are at least potentially 'whole' and unified, while the human development model also suggests a continuity and an inevitability, such that cultures deemed to have omitted one or more phases are seen as 'distorted' or perverted in their development. Frye refers to a "foreshortening" of Canadian cultural history,<sup>99</sup> a judgement which refers less to Canadian cultural production than to a preconceived pattern of 'normal' development. Consequently, 'stages' of 'development'

are not merely descriptive of a process, but imbued with positive or negative value, even moral value, in themselves. They are qualitative judgements of the culture, with the valorised term being 'maturity' or 'adulthood'. However, it has been defined as axiomatic that "We must beware of imagining that the idea of development should be administered by the idea of improvement," a notion which carries the "echo of nineteenth century imperial optimism."<sup>100</sup> Further, the moral implication of reference to a view of normalcy or naturalness leads to the second important aspect of the organic view of culture deriving from a belief in *Volksgeist*. Emphasis on wholeness and unity implies a valorisation of purity which has as its inevitable corollary a devaluation of difference. Difference can only be excluded, and in a paradigm which encourages moral discourse, vilified.

Confusion over the ontological status of national identity is often reflected in contradictory verbs expressing its actualisation. The discourse of 'nation' as expressed in terms of (human) development from dependent infancy to sovereign maturity has given rise to references to the *evolution* of Canadian national identity,<sup>101</sup> and the teleology of 'maturity', with its concomitant implication of pre-maturity as inauthenticity or 'non-identity', has enabled commentators to speak of the *emergence*<sup>102</sup> of identity. It has also been claimed, for example, that "New Zealand writers, politicians, academics and critics have . . . tried to *discover*, perhaps even *foster*, a distinctively New Zealand culture," an assertion followed closely by reference to New Zealanders turning increasingly to "their art, their literature, their history, politics, wars, and their sporting achievements in order to *uncover* their identity as a people."<sup>103</sup> Is 'identity' therefore fortuitously happened upon, or divested of some obscuring force, and does the latter reveal 'true' national identity which a veil of ideology (false consciousness) had mutated into 'false' national identity? Or is identity nurtured from an immature to a mature state, and is this nurturance one which simply allows a natural, pre-determined course to be worked out, or is it an actively shaping, determining process? Is 'identity' only authentically 'identity' when maturity is reached?

As Richard White has observed of Australian national identity, an argument relevant to all national assertions of identity,

There was no moment when, for the first time, Australia was seen 'as it really was'. There is no 'real' Australia waiting to be uncovered. A

national identity is an invention. There is no point asking whether one version of this essential Australia is truer than another because they are all intellectual constructs, neat, tidy, comprehensible -- and necessarily false.<sup>104</sup>

White's use of the word 'false' is somewhat unfortunate because of its implication that there is an opposing 'truth'. When it is admitted that national identities are constructed, a set of completely different questions from those of essence and truth or correctness must be addressed. However, it becomes both possible and necessary to acknowledge the different methods by which identities are constructed, and thus to address not the authenticity or inauthenticity of each or any of them, but the ideological interests and assumptions which underpin and inhabit them. National identities, in order to function as such, must appear to be inclusive; indeed, in order to appeal they must, in short, *appear*, and they do so as images or representations. They cannot be 'found' as naturally occurring phenomena outside of the discursive realm, and in this sense they are not arbitrary. They are products of the acts of their construction. Occasionally, though not always, these constructions are deliberate and self-conscious. However, when the contents of the images of national identities are analysed in relation to the principles underlying their construction, aspects of their ideological purpose and functioning become clear. It also becomes clear that such constructions, contrary to their purpose of representing *national* identities, draw on a range of metaphysical, ideological and political inheritances deriving from beyond the boundaries of nation itself. In fact, as Richard White argues, "The very idea of national identity [is] a product of European history at a particular time;" it is "part of the 'cultural baggage which Europeans have brought with them, and with which we continue to encumber ourselves."<sup>105</sup>

Three ways, for example, in which national identity may be constructed include the search for, or identification of, something considered *distinctive* about the nation, the identification of something *typical* of the nation, or the recognition and valorisation of the *exceptional* instance. Of course such categorisation is artificial, and there is frequently overlap. Further, the following discussion does not seek to present a comprehensive list of 'distinctive', 'typical', and 'exceptional' features in a composite portrait of national identities, but to focus upon the methods and functioning of their construction, with a small number of examples for clarification and illustration.

First, the national identity may be considered to inhere in something seen as *distinctive* about the country or its people, something that can differentiate it from others. Such distinctive characteristics are commonly derived from the flora and fauna of a land, which then emblemise the nation's identity. However, even when such things can be called 'indigenous' or distinctive, it is not the flora or fauna themselves which signify identity, but the meanings and affect with which they are imbued. This is clear in the statement that "A country that can *boast of* kangaroos, koalas and platypodes needs few other symbols of national identity."<sup>106</sup> Suzanne Zeller explains that by the 1860s, with the addition of botany to the inventory sciences,

Certain plants, their geographical distribution, and Canada's potential for cultivation were adopted as symbols and pressed into service as portents of this expansive destiny. The maple leaf . . . had been used as an emblem in Quebec since the seventeenth century and was widely accepted by the 1830s among both French and English Canadians. Much as the Geological Survey of Canada encouraged appreciation of the Laurentian Shield as a peculiarly Canadian environmental attribute, so botany seemed to show the maple, widely distributed across Canada from Lake Superior eastward to the Atlantic seaboard, to represent Canadian unity.<sup>107</sup>

Indeed, the attachment of national affect is what enables a feature of the landscape to be considered both emblematic and distinctive, when in a nation like Canada, which is both geographically vast and diverse, and yet also part of a politically divided larger continent, these designations must be at least problematic within the 'natural' paradigm that is invoked. Zeller continues:

The maple lacked the undesirable connotation attached to the beaver, a member of the rodent family. But it posed problems later when it was shown not to grow west of Manitoba; nor could the maple, ironically, represent permanence. 'If it remains in the tree,' Sandford Fleming admitted, 'it disappears with the summer, if plucked from the tree it . . . almost immediately wilts . . . and perishes.'<sup>108</sup>

Such flora and fauna or other features of the landscape, even aspects of the indigenous cultures, are emblemised through their containment in arrested or stereotypical representation, and ultimately function through their commodification.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, sentimentalised figures from the 'cultural past' may also be invoked in the spirit of national distinctiveness. Such figures have sometimes derived from stereotypes of a past which no



longer threaten with their 'reality' and thus allow for nostalgia. For example, the romanticisation of the 'noble bushman' to the point of "national culture-hero" of Australia, relied upon the separation of the image from the 'real' figure of the past. Richard White has referred to "the contribution of urban bohemianism to the imagery of bush life," and points out that the bush-worker "was ennobled as 'the Bushman' and his capacity for drunkenness and blasphemy forgotten."<sup>110</sup> Similarly in New Zealand in the 1950s and 60s, the "itinerant direputable unattached male now achieved a legendary status." As Phillips argues, "the society was now so orderly and settled and men so securely locked into job and home that the itinerant frontier male was no longer any [moral and economic] threat at all and his habits could be winked at."<sup>111</sup>

Clearly, one of the problems with such a method of constructing a national identity is that it fails to account for the appearance of the same phenomenon in another country. This is particularly the case when the distinctive features are abstract qualities such as 'mateship'.<sup>112</sup> Dennis Altman suggests a source for the Australian myth of mateship in the writings of English-born Alexander Harris in the 1840s. After spending years in Australia, Harris went to Britain and the United States and wrote of his colonial experiences. Altman cites Harris' observation of "'the exertions bushmen of new countries, especially mates, will make for one another, beyond people of the old countries.'"<sup>113</sup> There is a generality to this statement which compromises its Australian 'distinctiveness'. However, while the 'content' of the image is not necessarily unique, such that "One can find similarities to this in other frontier societies," the *strength* of the image is perhaps 'distinctive': "the features of settlement that helped promote the more generalised conception of mateship were less evident on the highly individualistic North American frontier. Even New Zealand, the country whose white history most resembles [Australia's], has not elevated mateship to the level of mythology."<sup>114</sup> Thus, it is not only the strength, but the functional *position* of the notion of mateship which makes it distinctive: "What is unique to Australian mateship is precisely its mythological character."<sup>115</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge the purpose of such images of national distinctiveness, or the way they function to appeal, by way of the *attached affect*, to a sense of belonging, and through belonging, to national unification. For example, to cite Zeller again:

In recognition of the sense of nationality they deemed indispensable to the further progress of the country, Egerton Ryerson, J.H. Morris, and others organized a procession of native-born Canadians. Those born in Canada or, it was emphasized, in any other British North American colony distinguished this fact by wearing the symbolic maple leaf. Ryerson believed that the movement would 'blend the whole population of Canada in one deep, universal, unanimous feeling of devotion to the best interests of their common country'.<sup>116</sup>

Similarly, the use of the kiwi in New Zealand reaches beyond significance as 'national bird' to a symbolic naming of New Zealanders themselves. Through a play of ideological associations, and the masking of the discourse of nationalism itself (through reference to nature), the sense of belonging is experienced positively as 'natural', and the resultant unification of national affect is available to the purposes of the 'ruling class'.

Second, the construction of national identity in terms of *typicality* is frequently related to 'national distinctiveness' through a process of generalisation and normatisation of a distinctive, or distinctively strong, feature or characteristic. The normative function appeals to paranoid fears of either what is 'outside' (difference), or being 'outside' (exclusion). It can therefore be seen that the notion of typicality encompasses both xenophobia and conformity. In the case of national identity constructions founded on 'typicality', it is less an object than an idea or an image that is commodified: it is held to *reflect* the mass of the population -- thus the numerically normative, or 'descriptive' sense of 'typicality'; however, the numerical implication masks the process of imposition of a normatising image, so that, for example, "the true 'Australian' was not a statistical concept but a figure with some consciousness of a particular historical mission."<sup>117</sup> In short, the image is actually transmitted and imposed on to the population, *prescribing* its applicability, whether to individuals as 'types' within the population, or the mass 'way of life' that is considered 'typical' of that nation. Such images, because they are reflective, tend to be backward-looking, and even nostalgic, in that they represent not a current image, but one derived from the past. For example, Jock Phillips points out that "As men settled into their domestic niches and as the society became more bureaucratic, organised and urban, so men clung to images of exaggerated physical prowess. Growing fat in sedentary jobs, men responded to models of frontier masculinity."<sup>118</sup> Similarly, with regard to the Australian bushman, Beryl Donaldson Langer points out that "While

the centrality of the bush in the nation's image of itself was hardly an accurate reflection of Australian life, which was already highly urbanised, identification with bush workers continued into the twentieth century."<sup>119</sup> Yet these images deploy their nostalgia to the purposes of definition and determination of the future. Zeller points out, in the context of the growing belief in the association of "Canada's 'northernness' and its connotation of an appealing manliness," that

By 1858 [Alexander] Morris had constructed a full-blown image of a 'Great Britannic Empire of the North,' with its 'goodly band of Northmen from Acadia, and Canada, and the North-West, and the Columbia, and the Britain of the Pacific.' They constituted 'a noble army of hardy spirits encased in stalwart forms.' He invited Canadian audiences to 'consider the *energetic character* inherited by our people, which the fusion of races and the conquering from the forest of new territories' had fostered, and which climate had 'rendered hardier.' The result, he predicted, would be *one nation*, a 'harmonious whole - - rendered the *more vigorous* by our northern position'.<sup>120</sup>

However, where there is an awareness of national diversity, images of typicality are less likely to succeed. For example a unified 'Canadian' identity is more overtly compromised by its specific French and English colonial pasts, and the continuing existence of two politically and legally acknowledged historical and cultural heritages. Thus it has been claimed that "the idea of a representative figure was more than a rhetorical self-contradiction: it struck at the essence of her necessarily fragmented cultural history."<sup>121</sup> Yet the problem has been identified as more strongly an English-Canadian one, because, according to certain French-Canadian nationalist arguments, "even if you deny that these attributes give them the right to call themselves a nation, there is no denying the distinctiveness of the values they cherish. These are loyalty to the family, to the church, to the soil, to the homeland, and to the race."<sup>122</sup> By contrast, English-Canada has been defined as "everything . . . that is not French Canada."<sup>123</sup> Thus despite the recognition of diversity, there remains a drive to unite this into a nationhood that can be imaged. Indeed, as will be argued more fully later in the chapter, diversity itself tends to become reified into that image. The conflation of "national health with virility"<sup>124</sup> has been identified in the context of New Zealand's earliest international involvements in war, and it "ignored" not only "half the country's people" -- the women -- but also those men who did not conform to the stereotype of virility. Homosexuals were not only considered "effeminate"

but, having been totally excluded from military services, as threats to *national security*. Thus, while such images function powerfully to appeal to a sense of unity, they also have strong normative implications. In short, the 'typical' figure appeals to unity, not simply through assertions or 'recognitions' of typicality, but also through their normative functioning which works to suppress *a*-typicality, and devalue or vilify difference. To return to the Australian notion of 'mateship', part of the 'typically Australian' outlook was based, in Russel Ward's formulation, on

a comradely independence based on group solidarity and relative economic plenty, a rough and ready capacity for 'stringy-bark and greenhide' improvisation, a light-hearted intolerance of respectable or conventional manners, a reckless improvidence and *a conviction that the working bushman was the 'true Australian'*, whose privilege it was to despise 'new chums' and city folk.<sup>125</sup>

More specifically, Altman points out that "the top and the bottom of colonial society are largely excluded from the construction of the myth," that "convicts were not usually thought of as exemplifying mateship," and "Mateship is not generally associated with the officers and gentry." The myth was also racially exclusive, such that "the mateship of the pastoral workers rigidly excluded Asians from the nomad tribe," and "there are few examples of Aborigines being admitted to the magic circle of 'mates'." In any event, individual cases can do little to shake the institutionalised exclusion of Aborigines.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, the image was specifically male, despite its ability in its more social and class-based formulation, to encompass women.<sup>127</sup> Richard White points out that "A set of values had been identified with 'The Coming Man' and these were commonly attributed to the Australian 'type.'" Moreover,

Men embodied these values. The emphasis was on masculinity, and on masculine friendships and teamwork, or 'mateship'. . . . Women were excluded from the image of 'The Coming Man,' and so were generally excluded from the image of the Australian 'type' as well. They could acquire a kind of *second-rate masculinity* by being clever with horses or being a 'tomboy', a phenomenon which began to appear in the late nineteenth century. More often, women were portrayed as the *negation of the type*.<sup>128</sup>

It is both historically and epistemologically consistent that this search for the 'one-ness', or unifyingly typical figure or characteristic should almost always result in representations of masculinity and virility. Women have generally been excluded from the national identity

constructs of these once-colonial nations. Their participation can only be in terms of a 'second-rate' imitation of the male construct, while their more frequent status as negation of the male 'type' illustrates the singularity of phallogentric subjectivity: women as non-men. Therefore, their exclusion is not simply a function of some deliberate conspiracy among men. As has already been shown, a culture founded on phallogentric structures of subjectivity cannot image the sovereign nation-self as female. This is actually borne out, rather than refuted, by the relatively stronger position of women in (English) Canada's cultural production and representation: "In the absence of clearly defined national characteristics women are not automatically excluded from the realm of the typical. The confusion about national identity might not in itself facilitate women's entry into culture, but it does leave open this possibility . . . ."129 I would expand upon this with the point that it is not simply the lack of a fixed and exclusive typicality which excludes women on the level of representation, but the lack of typicality in its structural sense which has not totally repressed/suppressed *difference* from its phallogentric morphology. Hence the arguably stronger obsession with "the old identity riddle", the continuing search for Canadian identity."130 Indeed, Donaldson Langer points to an historical basis for the perpetuation of Canada's 'feminine' and therefore compromised sovereign 'subjectivity':

Whereas the Australian identity was premised on opposition . . . to British tradition and constraint, as an assertion of frontier notions of rugged manliness and simple bush virtue, the fact that English-Canadian identity was shaped by a *dual* opposition (to Britain and the United States) meant that the frontier ethos was modified considerably. With political and cultural absorption into the United States as a constant possibility, emphasis on British ties and traditions was a way of preserving national integrity.<sup>131</sup>

When Britain is 'mother', Canada's defensive identification with 'her' against the American 'threat' is clearly that of the daughter who must recognise her own femininity, or castration/lack of wholeness.

Third, there is also a relationship between national identity sought through appeals to typicality and that which posits the *valorised exception*, which seeks to achieve a sense of unity through appeals to national pride. This perhaps parallels the narcissistic mirror-stage (unifying) identification as opposed to the aggression which characterises the fear and resultant (paradoxical) exclusivity of typicality. What is valorised is, nevertheless,

ideologically determined and, like the 'typical' figure, ultimately normative. However, qualities attributed to the valorised exception may be seen as instantiating the pinnacle of 'national' qualities, or may be extrapolated and applied to the national population in a rallying function. It has been observed of New Zealand that "there can be few nations which have so single-mindedly defined themselves through male heroes. The national icons . . . have all been male."<sup>132</sup> Obviously not all New Zealanders, however, belong to the national representative rugby team, the All Blacks, and yet the synecdochal convention of referring in sporting commentaries and discussions to 'New Zealand versus Australia' and so on, creates a sense of *national* participation and the desire for *national* victory and glory in the sporting achievement. The (admissible) qualities associated with sports teams and individuals are held to reflect national character. The manager of the All Black team which toured Britain in 1905 is cited as having declared that "Rugby football is the New Zealand *national* game, every *boy* in the colony plays it, and this team, chosen almost by *national* assent, is the result of much care and thought. It represents the *manhood and virility of the colony*."<sup>133</sup>

1. III. (i). Literature and National Identity. Literature has served as the most consistent source and transmitter of images of national identity. For example, it has been claimed that "it is through literature that a civilization expresses itself, through literature its values and its tendencies become conscious and its creative force becomes eloquent and evident,"<sup>134</sup> and that "The notion of the Australian national character is imported from literary stereotypes, satire, and other works of imaginative exploration."<sup>135</sup> In fact, as will be argued, assertions of the 'achievement' of national identity have tended to be contemporaneous with the development and transmission of myths of national literary identity, or literary nationalism. Margaret Atwood states that

A piece of art, as well as being a creation to be enjoyed, can also be . . . a mirror. The reader looks at the mirror and sees not the writer but himself; and behind his own image in the foreground, a reflection of the world he lives in. If a country or a culture lacks such mirrors it has no way of knowing what it looks like; it must travel blind.<sup>136</sup>

However, apart from the notion of *reflection*, the 'mirror' image appropriately evokes the function of unification, and through unification, the *production* of (national) character and (national) identity which has

been discussed in relation to individual psychological development and the development of nationhood. Benedict Anderson has described the crucial functions of print, and print-capitalism in the very possibility of the development of the Nation, functions which turn upon the unification of linguistically and otherwise diverse population-groups.<sup>137</sup> Similarly, Ernest Gellner describes the requirement of a centralised, high (literate) culture in the constitution of nationhood.<sup>138</sup> In short, print effected a unification of the population through communication and the ability to conceptualise a 'community', and centralised a 'high' culture which required a trained -- literate -- population for its dissemination. Further, Timothy Brennan has pointed to a special association between the novel and the nation: "It was the *novel* that historically accompanied the rise of nations by objectifying the 'one, yet many' of national life, and by mimicking the structure of the nation, a clearly bordered jumble of languages and styles."<sup>139</sup>

Nevertheless, the mirror functions two ways: the relationship between Nation and literature is symbiotic, and it is the nation which has been seen to constitute -- or unify -- the literature as *a* literature, *embodying* a nation's literary *identity*. Indeed, it has been stated that "*only* a national literature can be considered literature at all, since only such a literature is representative."<sup>140</sup> The imagery of the body has been deployed to render the notion of a literary identity, and thus to locate literature within the now familiar organic and developmental discourses of the individual. Vincent Buckley argued his certainty that "there is a body of Australian work which is distinctive as a body, and the parts of which bear a distinctive and intimate relationship with one another."<sup>141</sup> He went on to identify the size, rather than the existence of this 'body', as the point of critical contention, but consistent with the image of the literature as a 'body', he refers to Stephenson's insistence that this literature "would be arriving, or . . . would be recognized, any time now."<sup>142</sup> The distinctiveness of Australian literature was not in question; however, its *autonomy*, at this anticipatory juncture, was. Buckley refers to Arthur Phillips' "stress on the 'family relationship' between Australian and English Literature,"<sup>143</sup> and argues that "as a dependent literature, its development follows the changes in the English literature of the same period, and is *part* of the English literature of the period."<sup>144</sup> It follows, therefore, that "it can't be analysed on the grounds that it is entirely separate and autonomous literature. Its distinctiveness doesn't go as deep

as that, and it isn't as complete as that."<sup>145</sup> This same characterological imagery enabled Northrop Frye similarly to declare of Canadian literary history that

It is not much wonder if Canada developed with the bewilderment of a neglected child, preoccupied with trying to define its own identity, alternately bumptious and diffident about its own achievements. Adolescent dreams of glory still haunt the consciousness (and unconscious), some naive and some sophisticated.<sup>146</sup>

However, 'autonomy' was precisely the aim of literary nationalists. Like 'identity' itself, the achievement of national literature was congruent with the achievement with 'mature' literature. Thus Frye asserted that "Canadian literature since 1960 has become a *real* literature,"<sup>147</sup> a view which begs the question of what the literature was before this time. Similarly, Leonie Kramer stated that an Australian "national literature. . . will not be derivative, and the sign that it has grown to maturity will be its independence of foreign influence, and unself-conscious expressions of its own sense of place and identity."<sup>148</sup> This mature autonomy is founded necessarily upon phallogocentric assumptions. David Walker points out that the "refusal to remain deferential to the parent culture was a vital emotion among [Australian] literary nationalists precisely because it helped overcome their sense of cultural *impotence*,"<sup>149</sup> and Buckley's over-riding concern with the viability of Australian Literature as an object of study -- a subject of self-reflection -- encompasses the need to see "what other disciplines (if any) must be called into play to help us *erect it* into a study at all."<sup>150</sup>

An implication of such organic developmental imagery is a national-literary essentialism. It enables Margaret Atwood to refer to discussion of "Canadian literature, as *Canadian* literature -- not just something that happened to be written in Canada,"<sup>151</sup> and to argue for the identification of literary, including thematic, patterns which "taken together, constitute the shape of Canadian literature insofar as it is *Canadian* literature, and that shape is also a reflection of a national habit of mind."<sup>152</sup>

The logic of the relationship between national unity and literary images of national 'selfhood' involves the embodiment of the national 'self' in the individual writer who transmits these images. 'Representative' literature is the product of the convergence of nation and



individual writer. David Lloyd explains, in relation to Irish nationalism, a process which is entirely applicable to Australia, Canada and New Zealand:

The proper function of the Irish writer would . . . be to represent the people, in every sense of that word. If, at one level, this involves the demand to depict Irish people and their ways, it is intrinsic to [the] argument that proper depiction is a function of the representativeness of the writer as Irish. In a sense of the word quite strictly analogous to its usage in democratic political theory, the writer is the people's representative. Accordingly, the concept of representation in play here involves an implicit narrative of development: by representing in himself the common identity of the Irish people, . . . the writer produces the national and subjective unity which is as yet only a latent potential. [Thus one may insist] upon a continuity between individual and national identity that is borne by literature.<sup>153</sup>

There appears to be an enactment of this analysis in Atwood's critical strategy in *Survival*, where she treats texts "as though they were written by Canada . . . . [U]ntil recently our authors were treated only as private people. Authors are also transmitters of their culture."<sup>154</sup>

The search for, or identification of 'representative' or typical national literature has been made in terms of literary characteristics such as themes, motifs, perspectives, and so on, which encapsulate 'essential' aspects of the nation. For example, Australian nationalist literature has tended to be 'recognised' by its use of the motifs of the Bush, and Mateship, and its 'democratic' perspective, while New Zealand nationalist literature was 'recognised' by its use of the 'Man Alone' motif -- 'alone' initially against the natural elements, and later against an unjust society. Writing admitted to the New Zealand 'nationalist' canon was populated by, and represented the voices of reticent, even inarticulate, 'good rural blokes'. Canadian 'nationalist' writing has perhaps been less clearly demarcated, particularly into an historical period of dominance, but also into motifs and perspectives. However, Frye identified the 'Garrison mentality' which shares with Australia and New Zealand the idea of 'man' (which may be inclusive of 'woman', but this does not alter the 'masculine' structure of the quest), pitted against hostile external forces, notably landscape, climate and so on. Margaret Atwood isolated 'survival' as the characteristically Canadian ethos. Yet even Canada's resistance to the representative figure, whether literary or otherwise, has become reified into a Canadian 'characteristic'. Coral Ann Howells has argued that "Canadian

distinctiveness may be seen to lie in efforts towards autonomy through displacing the authority of other traditions in order to give a place to what has been traditionally regarded as marginal. As a process of decentralization it is characteristically Canadian."<sup>155</sup> The reification is most clearly evoked in the image of the location of Canadian identity being found "not nationally, but in a *mosaic* of regional experiences."<sup>156</sup> Like those of 'national identity', signs of literary nationalism comprise emblemised, ultimately commodified ideas of land, society, and history, culminating in the greater truth to the literary purpose of the label (signifier) than its 'meaning' or referent (signified). H.P. Heseltine despaired of Australian literature: "Is our tradition after all to be summed up in this or that single word -- Mateship? Landscape? Nationalism? Is what we have received from the literary past so *thin* that the simple labels do, in fact, suffice?"<sup>157</sup>

Again, like emblems of national identity, the question of the truth or falsity of these emblems is not the salient one. As labels or emblems, they are clearly reductive, and yet as David Walker has argued in a slightly different context:

This is not to say that there are no discoverable patterns of thinking about the character of . . . society and the functioning of the imaginative writer. There are. But the patterns are not as 'natural' 'inevitable' or self-evident as some critics appear to believe.<sup>158</sup>

The point is that the construction of national literatures and literary nationalisms did tend to be self-conscious processes of myth-making. The myth that Australia and New Zealand 'gained' national identities in the 1890s derived in significant part from the self-conscious national myth-making of the editorial policy of, and contributions to, the Australian journal, the *Bulletin*. The *Bulletin* has been described by Adrian Mitchell as having been, "[i]n most views of Australian literary history . . . the spawning ground for a new authentic Australian Literature." Serving as "the exclusive forum for the new realism," the *Bulletin* "above all required original writing; there was to be no imitation of the old Anglo-Australian conventions."<sup>159</sup> As Kramer explains,

The legend of the nineties is both a legend and a reality. It is a reality in that the work of Paterson, Lawson and later Furphy is distinctive in its representation of place and people, and in its cultivation of the idiom of Australian speech. It is legendary in that, while representing

a part of the reality, the part in turn has been represented as the whole, or at least as the essence of the whole.<sup>160</sup>

Similarly, Walker's *Dream and Disillusion* concerns "four men and their friends all of whom wanted to *establish* a national culture in Australia."<sup>161</sup> Such an undertaking clearly undermines notions that a national culture is either always already there, or even that it 'naturally' evolves. New Zealand literature entered a 'nationalist' period in the 1890s, very much influenced by the literary scene in Australia, and many prominent New Zealand writers contributed regularly to the *Bulletin*, which was also read relatively widely in New Zealand. However, New Zealand entered a second 'nationalist' phase in its literary history in the 1930s, when because of the social conditions of the time, largely the impact of the Depression, social criticism was regarded as the only valid motivation for the writer. Such views were promulgated at the time by the "literary group," consisting of Sargeson, Fairburn, Brasch and Glover, amongst others. Charles Brasch's influence was heightened by his position as the first editor of the principal New Zealand literary journal, *Landfall*. Sargeson has been seen as the "father" of New Zealand literature, "being widely regarded as the first writer to have successfully adapted local idiom into a literary medium, which enabled him to deal with and depict New Zealand experience."<sup>162</sup> Elizabeth Thomas describes the role that influential critics played in perpetuating the social-realist function and mode of writing. She cites H. Winston Rhodes' declaration that authors must write about "'ordinary people in their own context, and through them comment on the human condition in a wider sense,'" and refers to Bill Pearson's emphasis on "the artist's position as a moral teacher who must awaken the social conscience of the public."<sup>163</sup> A similar mission was deemed appropriate to Australian writers of roughly this (nationalistic) period, when "a certain literary canon emerged in the 1930s and 1940s. It enshrined 'the common man' and the virtues of egalitarianism and a spontaneous fraternal 'socialism' as values that were basic to the Australian tradition."<sup>164</sup> As in New Zealand, the implied function of the artist was "that of reflector of a communal experience, an active interpreter and shaper of a common culture,"<sup>165</sup> a function which rendered social realism the 'natural' artistic mode. According to David Walker, "Esson and Palmer often felt obliged, as Australian writers, to deal with aspects of working-class or rural life about which they knew relatively little,"<sup>166</sup> a view which reflected what Tim Rowse termed an anti-elitist tradition,

"involving a denial of the exceptional nature of intellectual activity. Literature was a formulation of common Australian experience; and bearers of the tradition were mediators of values that included the important virtue of egalitarianism."<sup>167</sup>

However, terms such as 'obligation' and 'denial' point to the *construction* of literary traditions, and their attainment of 'nationalist' status as a process of the suppression of other forms of writing and other imaginative and critical perspectives. Elizabeth Thomas points out that the 'typical New Zealander' was indeed only a certain type of New Zealander, and not in fact numerically 'typical'. Similarly, although the relationship is probably less the co-inciding of the two points, the New Zealand "literary group" of the 1930s was a *male* one, while "Robin Hyde is usually the only woman to be accorded mention in discussion of writing of this time."<sup>168</sup> However, positive critical recognition of her work was only given to those works, or even those aspects of her work which conformed to the dominant realist tradition, while the more 'subjective', 'poetic', and 'idealistic' "lapses" were castigated.<sup>169</sup> Susan Sheridan has referred to the "pejorative characterization of women's writing which emerged in the 1890s" in Australia,<sup>170</sup> and has identified a very similar response to the works of Miles Franklin and Barbara Baynton. Franklin and Baynton "are praised -- but only for transcending their female qualities and preoccupations. In both cases, praise is given to their representations of 'The Bush' -- and 'The Bush' comes to signify nationalism, literary originality and, by implication, masculinity."<sup>171</sup> However, Sheridan's purpose is to show *how* literary nationalism and 'masculinism' were conflated into the same structure, and she does this by showing "what happens when the excluded terms of the dominant discourse on cultural nationalism are made explicit:"

Furphy's phrase, 'temper democratic, bias offensively Australian' employs terms from the political end of a spectrum that runs through to the specifically literary; the obvious substitution in political terms would seem to be 'temper aristocratic, bias offensively British', signifying the class-bound colonial culture which the nationalists set themselves against. However . . . to substitute terms from the less political and more cultural end of the spectrum serves to show up the link between 'good' politics and 'good' writing which is *assumed* in the cultural-nationalist discourse of the *Bulletin* in the 1890s, and to show up the suppressed association between these positive terms (democratic and nationalist politics, realist and vernacular writing) and masculinity.<sup>172</sup>

A very different argument has been made regarding the relationship between Canadian nationalism and Canadian literature. While stable 'identity' has been shown in psychoanalytic terms to require the repression of (individual) multiplicity, and the unification of the pre-Imaginary fragmented body, in national terms this has been a more difficult task for Canada than for Australia and New Zealand. This, of course, does not mean that the latter are more homogeneous societies, but that the constructions of national population have more successfully repressed multiplicity in the forms of social and state institutions.<sup>173</sup> However, in Canada, the presence of the legacies of two historical imperialisms, the French and the English, and the political movement surrounding French separatist nationalism, as well as the physical proximity of the United States, and the long history of diverse immigration in Canada's "English" settlement, have combined to render the possibility of constructing a unified national image or identity for Canada extremely problematic. Multiplicity is the condition of Canadian national self-hood. As Coral Ann Howells puts it,

The awareness of such multiplicity problematizes the sense of one's own identity for instead of the self being solid and unified it becomes a more shifting concept without fixed boundaries . . . . This *feminine* awareness finds interesting parallels in the problematic concept of Canadian national identity, which has notoriously escaped definition.<sup>174</sup>

The implications of this for Canadian literature have been described as both a more secure place in 'Canadian Literature' in the institutionalised sense, for women writers, and an apparently very different 'political' basis to, or investment in, Canadian (literary) nationalism:

[I]t would seem that in Canada there is a connection between the preoccupations of nationalism and of women's fiction as strong though not as obvious as is to be found in many post-colonial Third World cultures. The ideological coincidence between nationalism and feminism would suggest one of the reasons why so much attention is being paid to women writers in Canada now. It might also be argued that women's stories could provide models for the story of Canada's national identity. . . . [W]omen's stories about procedures for self-discovery which are as yet (as always?) incomplete may be seen to parallel the contemporary Canadian situation.<sup>175</sup>

1. III. (ii). **The Discursive Illusion of the Sovereign Self.** To summarise, nations sought their identities in literature, while literature sought its constitution *as* literature through nations. This two-way specular relation can be explicated by way of two underlying conditions. First, literature is a discursive construct, an ordering of language, and it is upon entry into the Symbolic order of language that subjectivity is attained and identity may be -- *must* be -- spoken. Second, the entry into language alienates the subject, effecting a linguistic castration, simultaneously with its constitution:

Language isolates the subject from the Real -- both the subject's own being or libido and . . . the phenomenal world -- restricting it forever to the realm of signification. When the subject passes through what Lacan calls the "defiles" or grooves of signification that constitute its entry into the Symbolic order, it is reduced to the status of a signifier in the field of the Other (*l'Autre*).<sup>176</sup>

The Imaginary autonomy of the self produced in the specular relation of the mirror stage and subsequent specular identifications, is fractured with the entry into the Symbolic, which as a process, *depends* upon the Other, and the Other constituting the subject's alienations and dependencies in its particularities. Cameron defines Lacan's "overdetermined" Other as "the Law of the parents in the Oedipal situation (especially the Father and his substitutes), the unconscious, and the very structure of articulated language itself, the site of the signifier and the locus of the constitution of the subject."<sup>177</sup> While the implications of the function of the unconscious in decentring the subject, appropriately positioned by Cameron as pivotal between the two other senses of the Other, will be the focus of the section of this chapter dealing with post-colonialism, it is the first and third aspects of the Other which are of particular relevance at this point.

Language functions along two axes, the metaphoric axis of substitution (of signifier for signified), and the metonymic axis of the combining of signifiers in a chain which defers meaning until the point of closure. The subject's place in the Symbolic order is its place in the order of signification. The entry into language through Oedipalisation "separates the signifier, the paternal function, the Name-of-the-Father, from the biological father, thus permitting the child to take the father's place in turn."<sup>178</sup> The metonymic axis of language is that which determines that the subject takes up a position in the articulated structure of language, the potentially endless passage from signifier to signifier. This system is, like

the social order, preconstituted, and it is for this reason that "We inevitably lack any masterful understanding of language and can only signify ourselves in a Symbolic system over which we have no command but rather which commands us."<sup>179</sup>

Thus we approach the paradox of subjectivity: the attainment of subjectivity with the entry into the Symbolic order (of language) determines that while what is attained is, through the function of substitution, the possibility of the enunciation of 'I' for the self, and a position from which to articulate it, this is at the cost of, or predicated on, the exchangeability of the self for a signifier in the chain of signifiers which is language, a system structured by the ultimate exchangeability of all signifiers in the economy of the sign. The subject is constitutively alienated in, or castrated by language, where "in receiving a name and its substitution rules, it is transformed into a representation of itself."<sup>180</sup>

To return to the two-way relation of dependence between nation and literature, by positing 'nation', which has already been shown to have been imaged as the reading or writing self -- as subject -- it can be argued that 'nation' both reads the text for specular identifications, and is interpellated by the literary text, called upon to recognise itself in a (pr)offered subject-position:

The reader who is hailed simultaneously identifies with the subject of the speech, the enounced (an Imaginary operation), and takes her place in the syntax that defines that subject position (an operation of the Symbolic). The reader is thus the spoken subject, constituted through identification with the subject of speech. Although the subject constitutes itself through speaking, then, it is always simultaneously spoken -- and not just in reading because the subject receives its language and desires from the Other.<sup>181</sup>

Having demonstrated the illusory nature of subjective autonomy, and the nature of identity as inter-subjectivity, albeit by temporarily suspending consideration of the pivotal constitution and functioning of the unconscious and desire, an analogous argument may be made in relation to the illusory autonomy of nations such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand within the international order.

1. III. (iii). **Neo-Imperialism as Threat to Sovereignty.** Ernest Gellner has explained the basis of the nation in the "generalized diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements

of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication," and pointed out that with the nation comes the "establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind."<sup>182</sup> They are effectively held together by the advent of modern mass communications, whose role in the dissemination of the nationalist idea consists not in the content of 'nationalist' messages, but in the "pervasiveness and importance of abstract, centralized, standardized, one to many communication, which itself automatically engenders the core idea of nationalism quite irrespective of . . . the specific messages transmitted."<sup>183</sup> This could be argued to work in two mutually interdependent ways. First, it creates what Anderson termed the "imagined community" of nation -- a sense of the possibility that large numbers of people, mostly strangers, are receiving the very same transmission at the same time. But while the message is transmitted as one to many, establishing the *indifference* of the individual citizen, it is received as something more like one to one, and it is the co-incidence of these 'senses' that effects the individual citizen's interpellation by the ideology of nation, his or her 'own' sense of belonging to the fact of nation.

In short, the modern idea of the nation is one emerging out of, and requiring, modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation. Gellner further argues that there is an association between European imperialism at the time of the emergence of industrial society in Western Europe, and the character of the nationalisms that followed the "virtual conquest of the entire world by European powers, and sometimes by European settler populations."<sup>184</sup> Of course it is the latter which describes the eventual establishment of Australia, Canada and New Zealand as white-settler-dominated nations. However, Gellner characterises this imperialism as unusual:

Normally, political empire is the reward of military orientation and dedication. It is perpetrated by societies strongly committed to warfare. . . .

None of this was true of the European conquest of the world. It was eventually carried out and completed by nations increasingly oriented towards industry and trade, not by a militaristic machine.<sup>185</sup>

The repressed 'unconscious' of this account would of course be the story of the militaristic conquest of indigenous populations. However, this does not detract from the perception of the centrality of the requirement of



expanded commodity and labour markets which motivated British imperialism.

The rise of industrial capitalism saw the growth of an economy based on circulation of goods and capital. David Lloyd has explained the paradoxical logic of circulation and its establishment of the indifference of the subject-nation:

Because according to the logic of capitalist circulation in the labor as in the commodity market, any one thing can be exchanged for any other, including humans, the very forces that unleash the individual from traditional ties and impose the injunction to moral and economic "self-making" are those which assert the identity of all subjects.<sup>186</sup>

This paradox has already been discussed in relation to the economy of the sign in the subjective sphere. It is now clear that capitalism is such an economy on the national scale. Thus Lloyd refers to

the naturalness that accrues to the rhetoric of economic development by way of its congruity with the schema of development in the subjective economy: where the individual subject, within a narrative that to function must be universally the same, is to be integrated first with the nation and then with "humanity" (the family of nations), so each individual nation state must *be* developed into increasing integration in the global capitalist market.<sup>187</sup>

It was precisely the processes of industrialisation, urbanisation, and unification through the centralised technologies of mass communications, upon which 'whole', 'unique' and 'mature' nationhood were predicated which located the nation within the order of the international-Symbolic. At the same time, capitalism requires the *indifference* of nations (and citizens) as sources of labour and commodities (producers and consumers) for the global circulation of capital. Thus, the nation-subject is constitutively compromised both in its autonomy and its privileged position of command over its 'destiny' within, and the functioning of, the international-Symbolic economic and cultural system. As Lloyd puts it, "To be in perpetual debt is the normative condition of the subject, because an identity gained by way of the other can never be autonomous; in other terms, one labors to produce oneself for others."<sup>188</sup>

The indifferent, inter-dependent, once-colonial nation-subjects of world capitalism have been understood as the subjects of economic and

cultural neo-imperialism. Lloyd states that "to be inauthentic is to be made by another, to be given meaning, or read, by another." He further describes such inauthenticity as "equally the perpetual condition of the colonized: dominated, interpreted, mediated by another."<sup>189</sup> The 'Canadian mentality' has been described as one of colonial 'inauthenticity' as a result of that country's debilitating proximity to the United States:

Canadians have shared, or copied, their neighbours' exuberance but they have had to live with their own realities. The result has been a certain artificiality in outlook. Just because Canadians have always been looking over their neighbours' fence they have tended to exaggerate the point of view they have borrowed from him [sic]. They have been small-town people giving themselves big-city airs.<sup>190</sup>

The same 'suburban' imagery is used by Dennis Lee when he states that "Canadians were by definition people who looked over the fence and through the windows at America, un-selfconsciously learning from its movies, comics, magazines and TV shows how to go about being alive."<sup>191</sup> In the context of modernisation and urbanisation under capitalism, this suburban imagery is particularly appropriate. Tim Rowse has described, from the Australian context, the evocation of a national ethos by writers demonstrating an "increased preoccupation with . . . the everyday, the way of life, the basic common sentiments that Australians displayed, the things they typically enjoyed at home on the weekends."<sup>192</sup> The totalising impulse of the "[illumination of] the macrocosm through the microcosm"<sup>193</sup> was never achieved more effectively than through television, which "has proved to be a superb medium for holding up average suburban daily life as an object for contemplation."<sup>194</sup> Remembering the nature of mass media communications as one to many in transmission but one to one in reception, the commercial content and effect of television has helped *produce*, through its apparent *reflection* of consumer products and even images of a 'way of life', that very suburban ethos. As Rowse points out, "Contemporary modes of collective consumption are very home and suburb-centred."<sup>195</sup> However, the messages do not simply offer themselves for consumption by pre-formed, autonomous subjects who exercise choice in the matter of consumption. In interpellating the individual consumer, media images construct particular subject positions which define the subject as consumer. In other words, the suburban consumer, individually and collectively, is *read* and *spoken* by media messages. To return to Lee's image of the Canadian

Western as of FN culture

consumer of American popular culture, it is precisely "how to go about being alive" which is being learnt, and the 'reality' which is thus produced is a culturally and technologically *media*-ted one. This mediation can be understood in the subjective sphere as an alienation from the self: hence Lee's description of a resultant Canadian self-contempt: "The disdainful amusement I and others like me felt for Canadian achievement in any field, especially those of the imagination, was a direct reflection of our self-hatred and sense of inferiority."<sup>196</sup>

Canada has always been located in the dual position as "part of North America and the British Empire."<sup>197</sup> However, in accepting capital after the Depression, Canada found that "one kind of colonialism was replaced by another," and according to George Woodcock's claim, this resulted in "a permanent wounding of the Canadian collective pride, a wounding that is one of the reasons we tend to agonise so much about our identity."<sup>198</sup> Indeed an insidious loss of identity is evoked by Dennis Lee's characterisation of the Canadian response to cultural dependence on the United States. He argues that this dependence has not been clearly enough identified as a form of colonialism, and that an intellectual 'Uncle Tomism', a 'selling-out' has resulted from the loss of identity *and* the disavowal of this loss:

[T]he idea that these things confirmed our colonialism with a vengeance would have made us laugh our continentalized heads off. We weren't all that clear on colonialism to begin with, but if anybody had colonialism it was our poor countrymen, the Canadians, who in some unspecified way were still in fetters to England. But we weren't colonials . . . .<sup>199</sup>

To return to the developmental paradigm within which the nation-subject has been located, assertions of (national) maturity were associated with images of masculinity. Indeed, "phallic assertion" has been described as one mode of discourse and subject-position within the Symbolic order.<sup>200</sup> However, having demonstrated the illusory (Imaginary) nature of the autonomous phallogentric subject within the Symbolic, the constitutively 'compromised' nation-subject, the nation-subject of and in neo-imperialism, is recast as female, and characterised by sexual imagery, particularly images of passivity and vulnerability.

The entry of Britain's former daughter colonies into the 'family of nations' upon 'maturity' saw the increasing role of the United States in

their economies, cultures and international relations. Japan was also becoming increasingly important, however historical links with the United States, as well as cultural factors placed the United States in a more central position in relation to the former colonies. Indeed, Japan's role has been inextricably linked to its Westernisation, thus ensuring its participation in the capitalist requirement for global cultural homogenisation.<sup>201</sup>

'Maturity' has been linked causally with the increased involvement of Australia with the United States. Experienced by Australian intellectuals as "a rebellion against cultural provinciality and as a mature, rational confrontation of vested interests," Australia's 'coming of age' implied, among other things, "the shift of the Australian outlook away from Britain towards the USA and the Pacific basin."<sup>202</sup> Rowse continues that

The concept of 'imperialism' is rarely used to understand this 'maturation', but Grattan's analysis . . . suggests that one significance of the imagery of maturation and nationalism was the long-term assistance it gave to the realignment of Australian capitalism towards the USA and away from British capitalism.<sup>203</sup>

The association of national maturation and (neo-)imperialism can also be employed as a pivot upon which to turn back to the psychoanalytic discourse of the psychical development toward (sexual) maturity, and the place in the (patriarchal) Symbolic, of the individual subject, in this context, the female subject in particular:

In Freud's understanding, the girl's oedipus complex must ensure that she relinquishes her primary libidinal attachment to the mother in order eventually to take her father as love object. Her passive yet amorous, seductive relation to him inherits the structure of her prior maternal attachment, and is itself the mediating or transitional phase between (homosexual) maternal attachment and non-incestual heterosexual attachment. Although she must abandon the mother, the girl must retain an identification with her in order to acquire the appropriate feminine attributes.<sup>204</sup>

Among these attributes are "the substitution of the desire for the phallus for the desire for the mother" and "the acquisition of the skills of seduction," becoming a "passive object, who seeks, not (actively) to desire, but (passively) to be desired."<sup>205</sup>

Expressions of familial relatedness have 'naturalised' the turn of the Australian, Canadian and New Zealand gazes towards the United States. An ambivalence of affect accompanied a perception of unavoidable similarities between Australians and Americans in Alfred Deakin's 1908 belief in the need to invite the American fleet to extend its Pacific cruise to Australia: "'The closer the alliance between us the better, for although I am fully alive to the many objectional features of their political life, after all they are nearest to us in blood and in social, religious and even political developments.'"<sup>206</sup> This 'relatedness' constitutes, for Dennis Lee, the difficulty that Canada has had in challenging American neo-imperialism, just as the durability of English colonialism has been at least in part a function of the links of family (and) history:

The prime fact about my country as a public space is that in the last 25 years it has become an American colony. But we speak the same tongue as our new masters; we are the same colour, the same stock. We know their history better than our own. Thus . . . the way it undercuts . . . is less easy to discern -- precisely because there are so few symptomatic . . . battlegrounds . . . in which the takeover is immediately visible.<sup>207</sup>

However, the relationship between Britain's former colonies and the United States has not generally been expressed in terms of filial ties as it was with Britain. Although it has been claimed that Canadian "Confederation was a marriage of convenience, a strategem to protect the family interests against an *uncle to the south* . . . ." <sup>208</sup> the discourse expressing the Canadian, and even other Dominion relationships to the United States has more often revolved around sexual images, including seduction.

While the impact of American television, movies, films and magazines, widely disseminated in Canada, has effected the "American *cultural penetration* of Canada,"<sup>209</sup> it has also been emphasised that Americans "are not *forcing* Canadians. Canadians should be, and in fact are, quite free to refuse to look at, listen to, or read any American program, film or magazine."<sup>210</sup> However, although the penetration was not forced, it has been shown to be occurring in a context of power imbalance in diverse areas of the relationship between the two nations. Since the 1960s Canadians have become increasingly aware of an erosion of the strategic mutuality between Canada and the United States, and there has been "an increasing generalized Canadian concern about U.S. economic and cultural

domination. Thus although the defense relationship continued to be *intimate*, it was not without its problems."<sup>211</sup> The following passage is suggestive of a partnership, or a marriage, in which Canada fears for its identity in relation not simply to an overbearing partner, but to a structural inequality between it and the United States: "because the United States predominates in the bilateral relationship there is no danger of a loss of U.S. sovereignty stemming from an *intimate relationship* with Canada. This fact alone seems chilling to many Canadians."<sup>212</sup> Within this 'unequal marriage' metaphor is an expression of ambivalence which is evocative of seduction which, in the commonly understood sense of the term, effects a desired behaviour or relation not through force, but through attractive enticements. This ambivalence is in fact contained in the Freudian description of the girl's seduction of the father as preparation for adult seduction *by* the father-substitute. Even the role of "seek[ing] . . . (passively) to be desired" confers some activity on the girl, while the father-seducer, to seduce, must himself be seduced, rendering the process a mutual one, even if it is acted out between 'unequal' participants.<sup>213</sup> Further in relation to the passage above, what is traditionally lost by the seduced is, apart from innocence, 'reputation', and the reference to constraints on Canada's international place or 'voice', could be construed in this way as a very literal loss of reputation.

C. Hartley Grattan warned that this 'loss of reputation' would not be entertained by Australian nationalism. Although he was confident in 1938 that "as Australia becomes more mature, less 'colonial' and 'dependent', the cultural borrowings between the two countries will multiply," he was also aware of widespread determination that "Australia 'would not go the way of Canada.'"<sup>214</sup> However, Australia's gaze was described as having turned from "the constraints of British imperialism . . . towards the U.S.A., the nation that was to *consummate* its dominance of world capitalism during World War II."<sup>215</sup> The notion of American 'seduction' has also been lent support by the characterisation of Australia as an innocent, but sexually mature and alluring young woman. Richard White describes such 'feminine' images, or allegorical portrayals of Australia:

Firstly, she often had a particular relationship with Britannia or John Bull: there was a stress on the fact that she was the daughter, that she had parents, that she was growing up, approaching adulthood, about to flower into womanhood. Secondly, there was a distinctive stress on her remarkable beauty, but also on her innocence, her purity and

her vulnerability. She often found herself in difficult situations, modestly blushing at vice, naively shocked at corruption, or in imminent danger of being raped.<sup>216</sup>

Thus the way was set for perceptions of Australia and its inhabitants as vulnerable and innocent victims of the forces of corruption. The United States, or more precisely, 'Americanisation', embodied just such a corrupting influence. By the 1920s, "Hollywood was blamed for increasing vulgarity. Jazz, doubly evil because it was black as well as American, was seen as leading to immorality. American comics were *seducing* Australian children."<sup>217</sup> With increasing industrialisation, women occupied a more central role in a new Australian 'identity' founded on the principles of 'way of life' and consumerism. In 1947, the *Argus* Women's Magazine "told its readers that 'the American Way of Life is Easy for the Housewife'. . . . For the next two decades women were *inveigled* into buying small labour-saving devices and persuading their husbands to buy bigger ones."<sup>218</sup>

The strength of the American 'threat' to New Zealand has also been expressed as a function of the ambivalence of affect it generates among New Zealanders. Echoing Lee's observation that a lack of obvious battleground makes the incursion more insidious, it has been claimed of New Zealand that

the American threat is not military nor seriously economic, and the fact that it is limited primarily to the media may make it much more difficult to perceive and therefore to counteract -- if we choose to counteract. For many people in the world, the American way of life, even with all its inequalities, is highly attractive -- one might say *seductive*.<sup>219</sup>

However, concern over American economic expansion and its standardising mechanisms which both require and effect the elimination of cultural differences, has been related to the importance of a renewed focus upon, or sense of the importance of New Zealand's national identity:

nationalism associated with these differences -- that is, the desire of some people to preserve and enjoy their own distinctive way of life -- creates political barriers against the expansion of those mechanisms. Issues of culture and national identity are therefore of fundamental importance in the world today.<sup>220</sup>

Indeed, it is claimed that in opposition to the increasing domination by the United States and the 'seductive' way of life it offers, New Zealand, instead of 'succumbing', "can begin to develop a sense of autonomous identity that unites our people in opposing internal exploitation of the disadvantaged and external exploitation by the mighty."<sup>221</sup>

Therefore, responses to the 'neo-imperialism' of the United States have included a more concerted effort to reassert national sovereignty, and perhaps more clearly than in the context of British imperialism, to which the colonies were historically and sentimentally affiliated, the discourse has approximated that of the call for the liberation of the 'exploited' from the 'exploiters'.

#### 1. IV. The Post-Colonial Problematisation of Identity: The Unconscious as Difference Within the Self.

Post-colonialism comprises discourses which valorise 'authenticity'. In challenging the external threat to sovereign identity of (neo-) imperialism, post-colonialism concerns the rejection of false or imposed identities, and their replacement with, or revelation of, natural, uncolonised, or true identities. The underlying assumption in the view that Nation would, when divested of 'alien' garb, be truly revealed, is that the nation is essentially *there*, a view which nationalism deceptively, and indeed self-deceptively, affirms. It is also a view of 'nationalism' which sees it as external to Nation, acting upon it. However, as Gellner points out, "Nationalism sees itself as a natural and universal ordering of the political life of mankind, only obscured by [a] long, persistent and mysterious somnolence," but in reality, "nationalism is not the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force, though that is how it does indeed present itself. It is . . . the consequence of a new form of social organisation."<sup>222</sup>

Nations are produced -- engendered -- by a *process*; they are not essentially there so that their true form may be revealed. Yet nations are not on the other hand false. The true-false dichotomy is once again not applicable. Nations are both imaginary and real. They are imaginary in at least two senses: nationalism has been described as "an *imaginary cultural artefact* . . . . an imaginary production of . . . history and historiography;"<sup>223</sup> and it is Imaginary in the psychoanalytic sense of constituting a nostalgic desire for unity, the repair of the alienation effected by the mirror stage, when one confronts the image of oneself in the field of the Other, which



the entry into the Symbolic register of language both confirms and mediates through the insertion of the self into, and the assertion of the self through, the 'I'. Similarly, although nationalism "comes from no place, no real place,"<sup>224</sup> the nation is imaginarily located in, or identified primarily as, a *place*. The position of Nation in an essentialist epistemology is an effect of the naturalising discourse of the individual and its maturation to sovereign self-assertion. However, nations are real, in the sense that their constitutive discourse of nationalism has "real effects in the real world."<sup>225</sup> Therefore, a non-essentialist epistemology does not preclude a realist ontology.

However, the post-colonial concern with and for authenticity is more ambiguous than simply the need to remove, or at least parry, influences alien to Nation to reveal its underlying truth. This is a view of subjectivity which sees it as ideally centred or knowledgeable, but determined. It takes account only of what Paul Smith has termed the "subjection of the subject." He explains that

modern social theory is often a rather too neat conjunction of powerful social determinants and a prosaic, nay, passive self-awareness. Indeed the "subject" is ultimately construed there as little more than a compliant *object* designed to fit into the structures which can apparently be described satisfactorily enough by empirical research.<sup>226</sup>

In post-colonial discourse, identity and authenticity are inextricably implicated in questions of legitimacy, and it is the very questioning of legitimacy which constitutes a significant aspect of the problematisation of identity. It has been variously claimed that "the 'problem' of identity is the formal expression of a significant difficulty concerning the legitimacy of the . . . nation-state,"<sup>227</sup> and that post-colonialism is a 'crisis' not only for

those who bore the burden of imperialism: who have seen the destruction of their language and the mutilation of their culture. It is also a crisis for those who have been agents of colonialism and, who, once colonialism itself has lost its legitimacy, find themselves without strong ethical and ideological support.<sup>228</sup>

The notion of authenticity is compromised both for the colonised, who are no longer *purely* 'themselves', and for the colonisers, whose appropriation of the Name-of-the-Father and imposition of his Law contains a built-in paradox which threatens the whole presence-to-self of identity. This

paradox turns upon the dual meaning of 'legitimacy' as a biological and a moral state, but both conferred by the Law:

The question of origins calls identity into question, and the question of identity calls the origin into question. And if, according to a legal code dating back to Roman times, the identity of the father is as the nuptial ceremony declares, the legal fiction retains constantly the trace of that anxiety that inspired the arbitrariness of its namings. The uncertainty that attaches to the paternal origin both biologically and "morally" threatens always to undermine the integrity of the name, of the determination of paternal property and of identity itself. But because the self-identity of the subject, to which the father calls him, must always be established in opposition to the father, identity itself contradicts the appeal to originality that founds it. Hence the ambivalence that attaches to the concept of originality. . . . Hence, also, the reason why any nationalism must police the desire of women and, indeed, contain the mother within the matrix of a "motherland" which is always to be possessed by the sons of the fathers as their rightful inheritance.<sup>229</sup>

The policing of the "desire of women" is the basis not simply of patriarchy, but upon which phallogentric subjectivity is 'erected'.<sup>230</sup> It is the repression of the excess of the phallic self -- the feminine -- which constitutes subjectivity through the formation of the unconscious. The unconscious is the crucial term in the constitution of subjectivity which has, until this point in the discussion, been bracketed, or *barred*<sup>231</sup> in order to emphasise more strongly the moment(ousness) of its return.

This 'symptomatic' return -- symptomatic of structuring repressions; symptom as metaphor of the repressed -- is analogous to the reappearance in post-colonial discourse of the repressed/suppressed difference within Nation. However, the post-colonial recognition of, and challenge to, the attempt to obscure or annihilate internal difference in the name of Nation -- in short, the recognition of the constitution of a national 'self' by way of a process of internally perpetuated colonisation -- has been founded upon notions of subjectivity, and the relationship between the subject and the social which ultimately misconstrue the formation and functioning of the (national) unconscious.<sup>232</sup>

Post-colonial discourses typically posit the falsity, or at least partialness of 'nationalist' national identity, that national identity constructed by the dominant discourse of nationalism, as a function of the suppression of different 'groups' -- groups of *difference* -- within Nation. They posit as

more authentic, more complete, national identities which recognise and *include* these 'groups'. Thus while the nationalist concern for political and cultural unity reaches its extreme in expressions of the moral urgency of purity (the implications of legitimacy might be remembered here), the post-colonial concern for inclusiveness has been expressed in similarly moral terms. For example, the introduction to the volume of essays entitled *Culture and Identity in New Zealand* contains the apologetic admission that "There are some glaring gaps in this book. We regret the absence of . . . contributions from Maori women, from Pacific Islanders, from lesbian feminists, all of which were originally planned for inclusion."<sup>233</sup> The assumption is that the national identity has been false as a result of excluding, or at least marginalising, the perspectives of women, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities and others. Thus a national identity founded on the 'totality' is ideologically determined to redress a political and cultural imbalance, restoring 'equality' to marginal discourses.

However, there is a problem with such a 'common-sensical' conception which exposes precisely its ideological determination from within the dominant discourse of nationalism. Such post-colonial understandings of identity tend towards, and demonstrate a nostalgia for, the very unification against which they were articulated. For example, the description of a cultural or national identity as "an aggregate concept"<sup>234</sup> tends towards the reification of that aggregate into essence. It may be regarded as defining "the very fabric" of a society,<sup>235</sup> or may be interrogated for an "identity that *embraces* the many differences among us that brings us together in spite of or even because of the differences."<sup>236</sup> It has been metaphorised in the Canadian 'mosaic' ideology, which describes both the diversity of peoples and cultures comprising the nation, and yet also the "unity in diversity"<sup>237</sup> that as a tangible object -- Canada as mosaic -- it represents. This mosaic is evoked in the reference to the "host of [regional and non-regional] identities that are relevant to different situations" and which together "constitute a [Canadian] national identity which is *greater than the sum of its parts*."<sup>238</sup> Indeed, the nostalgia for unity which permeates even post-colonial recognition of and respect for differences and protean forms is most compromisingly evident in the hopeful conviction that "Only when the dominant culture ceases to reinforce prejudices will a common identity outweigh the separate ones."<sup>239</sup>

This unifying inclusiveness constitutes a response to the post-colonial anxiety surrounding legitimacy. It is a response which, faced with evidence of the fictionality of purity -- the 'return' of feminine desire -- turns to the legal fiction of legitimacy, in which the Law-of-the-Father confers the Name-of-the-Father, taking the 'many' differences into the One of post-colonial Nation. The Father's place is (re-)inscribed, and the bastards of maternal transgression claimed and named.<sup>240</sup>

Therefore, such conceptualisations of post-colonial difference have ultimately posed no challenge to the Nation-self. The repressed/suppressed has returned from an 'unconscious' conceptualised in a manner "consistent with . . . a 'stratified' model of personality," as "more or less simply . . . a storehouse of repressed content or as a mere barrier blocking awareness."<sup>241</sup> The belief in the possibility of the restoration of this 'awareness' -- undergoing a process of cultural and political 'consciousness raising' akin to the normative assumptions and functioning of ego-psychology -- is founded upon two misleading premises about the nature of subjectivity and the mediation of the unconscious. There is

the assumption that there could exist, one day, a kind of self-regulating human 'subject' which would in itself combine a sentience (albeit determined by the social environment) with a fully conscious activity (which may be exerted in and upon that environment). The underlying faith here is in the possibility of a *balance*, or of exactly a *rationality*. The second assumption is that such a 'subject' would be intrinsically part of some social totality which could be described as purely a sum of its social parts. . . : it is as if the social were to be understood as a complex but finally solvable calculation, with a neat whole number as its sum.<sup>242</sup>

Further, post-colonial identities are founded upon the belief that marginalisation constitutes falsification of an essence. Therefore, in post-colonial societies it is possible to find indigenous peoples engaging in and articulating their *authentic native identities*, and women similarly expressing the need for, and articulating versions of, real identities *as women*. Such claims to authenticity tend, however, to be grounded in the epistemological privileging of precisely their marginal or victim status. Jean Bethke Elshtain has challenged the view that if the values of the dominant discourse are oppressive, those of the powerless will not be: "The presumption is that the victim speaks in a pure voice. . . . But the belief in such purity may itself be one of the effects of powerlessness, and

that belief, congealed in language, is endlessly self-confirming."<sup>243</sup> The 'purity' can only be that of the victim as one of the "various monolithic Others"<sup>244</sup> which suppress their own internal difference; in other words, the purity of a 'counter-Self' (an alter-ego?) of the dominant discourse.

It is necessary, therefore, to question the ontology of those post-colonial 'groups' of Nation's difference. Post-colonial societies are characterised by a proliferation of groups and group-interests struggling for recognition of specificities held to be natural. However, these specificities and the assumptions which inform them are historically and ideologically determined. The assertion of identities of native peoples *as* native peoples necessarily occurs within a post-colonial context in which there is an Other -- the Coloniser -- against which 'native' is defined, has meaning, in short is *known* as such. It is post-colonial identities which are asserted, identities asserted as authentic which are fundamentally inauthentic by virtue of having been gained through the Other. The unified expressions of Maori, Australian Aborigine, Canadian Native Indian and Inuit identities have been constituted against, or in distinction to the colonising settlers and their descendants. 'Pre-colonial' identities were regionally, tribally and sub-tribally specific.<sup>245</sup> Similarly, referring back to the "glaring gaps" in *Culture and Identity in New Zealand*, before the mid-1970s, it would not have been likely to have occurred to anyone to specify lesbian feminists as a 'group'. Their 'recognition' occurred at a specific moment in feminist/lesbian history. Indeed, it would be more accurate to characterise it as a 'cognition'.<sup>246</sup>

The term "glaring gap" is a particularly apt pointer to the fact that such 'groups' are not merely historically and ideologically determined, but structurally determined by the dominant discourse which recognises them: "the 'new subjects of history' it posits . . . could only be those collective subjects who are visible and accessible, those who confront European hegemony as its unified, articulate, Manichean (polarised) opposite."<sup>247</sup>

Difference has therefore returned to the consciousness of the 'post-coloniser'. It has passed into political (Symbolic) meaning through language, thus alienating it from its being-self. Post-colonial contestatory groups are not the return of repressed content from the unconscious of Nation, but are symptoms or metaphors of the repression/suppression of difference upon which Nation was erected. Further, they return in forms

which replicate the structure of that Nation-self, in and as language and the Symbolic order. As Andrew McCann points out, "those narrative voices that are most readily recognised as the voices of the Other, by virtue of both their political immediacy and their will to power, involve their own measure of denial whereby still other voices are effaced."<sup>248</sup>

A clear example occurs in the discourses of indigenous peoples of Australia, Canada and New Zealand who reject multi-culturalism as obscuring their prior rights as the original inhabitants of their lands. Spokespersons for Canada's indigenous peoples have challenged Canada's multicultural policy arguing that "their special status as Canada's original peoples is negated by the policy." Thus they have rejected multiculturalism out of hand and have chosen instead to lobby for constitutional recognition of their treaty and aboriginal rights."<sup>249</sup> Similarly, Maori Sovereignty, while "at its most conservative . . . could be interpreted as the desire for a bicultural society,"<sup>250</sup> generally does not seek equality "in white terms" at all, but priority status for Maori. Accepting "nothing less than the acknowledgement that New Zealand is Maori land and . . . [seeking] the return of that land," Donna Awatere defines the project of Maori Sovereignty: "The aim is to redesign this country's institutions from a Maori point of view. The aim is to reclaim all land and work it from a Maori point of view. The aim is to enter the Pacific arena from a Maori point of view. To forge a distinctive New Zealand identity from a Maori point of view."<sup>251</sup> Spokespersons for such perspectives in New Zealand identify, and are identified as, Maori Nationalists. Like 'Australian', 'Canadian' and 'New Zealand' nationalism, Maori Nationalism is a response to colonialism; it rejects the 'colonial' or 'colonised' identity as inauthentic, and seeks both priority through authenticity and authenticity through priority. Maori Nationalism is similarly constituted against its own Others: both what Awatere terms "white hatred,"<sup>252</sup> but also, from within Maori the "collaborators" identified by Atareta Poananga as "those who choose to identify with those who overran and continue to oppress the tangata whenua,"<sup>253</sup> and those Awatere describes as "colonial Maori", the "forces within Maoridom that have become colonised beyond recall. These people have accepted as normal the key concepts underlying white culture."<sup>254</sup> Yet despite the pessimism underlying this expression, Awatere concludes that *"Every Maori belongs to us. No-one is beyond recall,"*<sup>255</sup> while Poananga declares that "This tradition of ongoing nationalism should be buried deep within

every Maori."<sup>256</sup> Thus there is a paradoxical inhabiting of the 'left-wing' liberationist position of decolonisation at the same time as the more 'right-wing' assertion of the association of political domination with racial or cultural uniformity. The argument for indigenous political and cultural domination is founded on a mirroring of the very principles of racial and cultural discrimination against which it emerged.

It is therefore necessary to examine further the production and the nature of dominant and marginal discourses. It is necessary to redress the error of regarding the dominant discourse as a singular and unified construct and marginalised discourses as similarly singular and unified within themselves. As Richard Terdiman has warned,

We must not be taken in by the rhetorical abbreviation in the phrase 'dominant discourse'. The moving and flowing network of practices and assumptions by which, at any of a series of endlessly divisible moments, social life is structured, ought not be abstractly reified. Such a hypostatization would ignore that dominant discourse is not a 'thing', but a complex and shifting formation.<sup>257</sup>

Thus, under imperialism, the 'dominant' discourse should not be seen as simply and singularly imperialist; under nationalism, it is not, again, simply and singularly nationalist. Its power derives from the strength of a conjoining of supporting discourses. These include, among others, racism, patriarchy, capitalism, heterosexism, all of which have themselves been supported by networks of discursive institutions such as religion, science and economics. Nor do these conjoining discourses together solidify into an impenetrable monolith whose strength lies in the sheer fact of the weight of so many isomorphic discourses. Their strength also derives from the flexibility of their articulation, their ability to shift focus, adapt to contingencies.

For example, Michael King, an historian who has faced both challenge and criticism as well as acceptance and approval for his researches into and presentations of Maori historical issues and materials, wrote the 'selectively' autobiographical *Being Pakeha*, "a book about belonging and not belonging" because it seemed an appropriate time to ask "What [does] it mean to be a Pakeha in New Zealand?"<sup>258</sup> Addressing the question of "whether or not there is such a thing as Pakeha *culture* in New Zealand," he argues that "For many Pakeha people, including myself, the inclination and indeed the need to define Pakeha-ness has been given momentum by

the current Maori cultural renaissance."<sup>259</sup> However this concern has not emerged solely as the product of Pakeha observation, on the 'sidelines' of this Maori renaissance. Donna Awatere has rejected any suggestion that "white New Zealanders have developed a culture that is particularly New Zealand in nature," other than "that which exists through opposition to the Maori."<sup>260</sup>

Culture has therefore become the term central to the debate over post-colonial authenticity, legitimacy and identity. However, precisely because it is a post-colonial debate (constituting a self-reflection which marks an alienation; an alienation which projects the 'subject' from being into meaning), authenticity eludes both 'sides'. Each is marked by the other, generating and compounding anxiety over cultural identity, and thus (because of the structuring, naming functions of 'culture'), over legitimacy.

This issue can be addressed with reference to an article entitled "Te Pakeha,"<sup>261</sup> which, in the context of the Maori 'cultural renaissance' addresses precisely the vexed issue of whether Pakeha *have* a culture. The article's address simultaneously demonstrates and disavows its own anxiety in the title, whose associations with, amount to an appropriation of, the name of *Te Maori*, a cultural event of international significance which focused on Maori. On the other hand, while the attempt, whether sincere or not, to 'feel' the authenticity of *Te Maori* as a cultural event has clearly at times, and in different ways, rebounded on Pakeha,<sup>262</sup> some confusion of affect could be expected in the paradox of *Te Maori* as a cultural event, with its own appropriation of Pakeha forms and involvement with Pakeha values and concerns. The taonga were not seen in their 'authentic' contexts: they never could have been together in any 'authentic' context, let alone in museum settings, or in New York. While referring to the "fierce debate" that such matters caused within the Maori community, Simon During mentions the account of the difficulties experienced by the organiser of the exhibition in New York, including "how to insure an object whose value is more magical than economic?"<sup>263</sup> Therefore, while "Te Pakeha" mirrored *Te Maori*, implicitly identifying the possibility of an authentic New Zealand culture with Maori, *Te Maori* mirrored Pakeha cultural forms. The anxiety which increasingly regards the only 'authentic' consideration of New Zealand culture to be Maori, at least in outward form, betrays its own appropriation specifically of the outward form alone. Further, this appropriation of strategic and



substantive discursive forms employed by Maori, and Maori mirroring of the Pakeha in post-colonial cultural expression, functions to secure, once again, the basis for the presence of Pakeha in Aotearoa/New Zealand,<sup>264</sup> and the impossibility of authentic identity.

It must not be assumed that counter-discourses issue in a one-to-one relation from those whose 'voices', once suppressed, begin to emerge: native peoples, women, the working classes, homosexuals. Examination of post-colonial discourses would reveal how they both intersect and contradict, how discourses competing with the dominant are just as much competing with each other, or at least working both with and against each other. In short, the post-colonial world is articulated as a battle between discourses.

The relative powerlessness of black men and white women has been debated in terms of the men's complicity with patriarchy and the women's with racism. Yet both have defined themselves as 'oppressed' by the dominance of white, male, middle-class power structures. An analysis of such situations requires a post-colonial problematisation of identity which focuses on difference rather than the inevitably binary structure of opposition. Acknowledging difference within 'groups' means that such identifications are more likely to be recognised as constructs and less likely to operate monolithically through the suppression of heterogeneity and establishment and perpetuation of a hegemony. Stereotypes can be broken down, as can restriction of concepts of identity to the 'group-whole' opposition which retains the marginal sub-set status of the group, or the 'group-other group' opposition which adopts a rigidly inside-outside structure, encouraging notions of group purity or contamination.

However, as the example above has begun to indicate, the tension between contestatory discourses results not only from the contrasting or even contradictory claims and priorities of each, but in the fact that any subject is interpellated by multiple discourses, multiple social formations. When the basis of the difference within groups is recognised to lie in the difference within the constituent subject, then this principle of difference prevents the mere replacement of the 'subject-other' oppositions with a 'subject-group' opposition.

Being divided among discourses and ideologies, the subject cannot be held to be coterminous with the 'individual', with its implications of

undividedness and coherence. Neither the subject of political domination -- the sub-jected subject -- nor the subject of controlling consciousness can be theorised in terms which account for agency in resistance to dominant discourses and power structures. The former is entirely determined, and thus can move to no position from which to resist. The latter is entirely present to its consciousness, and thus has no *desire* to resist -- nothing is *lacking* in its current constitution. Indeed, there would be no reality to resist but merely the subjective perception of it. It is necessary, therefore, to take account of the function of the unconscious in the constitution of the 'divided subject', and its implications for the 'subject's' interpellation into, or resistance of, ideological discourses.

Unlike notions, discussed earlier, of the unconscious as a storehouse or repository of repressed content which simply *limits* the subject's awareness, and the content of which retains its integrity of form, Lacan "formulates the unconscious as the 'edge' at which the subject is structured in relation to the symbolic."<sup>265</sup> The Symbolic is understood here as "the *place* where we are in language and in social formations and . . . also the *process* whereby we fit into them."<sup>266</sup> However, although the term 'subject' has the advantage of foregrounding its constitution in language, it has the disadvantage of converging on the putative coherence of 'individual'. Because the existence and mediation of the unconscious "precludes the presumptive celebration of any unary self capable of accounting unproblematically for its actions, let alone for its motives or its constitution,"<sup>267</sup> it is more accurate to refer to 'subject-positions'. In this way the subject can be seen more accurately as a "complex of psychical formations which are constituted as the subject is positioned in relation to language."<sup>268</sup> These psychical formations are provisional, shifting and partial, so that "all subjects arise at a temporally shifting intersection of multiple interpellations. In effect, one is the subject of race, gender and class discourses as they are disproportionately activated by different cultural media."<sup>269</sup>

It is because of the structuring function of the unconscious that discourses of resistance which posit centred, self-sovereign counter-identities can only be *symptomatic* of 'their' repression. 'They' return, in other words, as symptomatic discourses. As Elizabeth Grosz points out,

Irigaray suggests a close resemblance between the unconscious in its relation to consciousness and women in relation to patriarchal social

relations. She accepts Freud's identification of the repressed with femininity but goes one step further: if what is repressed is the feminine . . . it is possible to regard women, not as *having* an unconscious, but as *being* it (for men, for the phallic, for patriarchy). Freud's concept provides a dazzling metaphor of women's simultaneously repressed/oppressed social position and the permanent possibilities of resistance -- the threat the unconscious poses to civilisation in its symptomatic 'return'.<sup>270</sup>

It certainly is possible to be dazzled by the reflected image of a 'return', but only when the freight of the term 'symptom' is overlooked. Despite the many differences between the projects of Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, the latter has also drawn an analogy within patriarchy between the feminine and the unconscious. However, remaining 'undazzled', she has developed the implications of this analogy for women as subjects of feminist resistance to patriarchy. She argues that

we must use "we are women" as an advertisement or slogan for our demands. On a deeper level, however, a woman cannot "be." It follows that a feminist practice can only be negative, at odds with what already exists so that we may say "that's not it" and "that's still not it." In "woman" I see something that cannot be represented, something that is not said, something above and beyond nomenclatures and ideologies.<sup>271</sup>

Kristeva therefore accepts "woman" as a politically necessary slogan or identification, just as the subject comprises colligations of subject-positions which effect a temporary suture in the constitutively split subject that enables the 'I' to be articulated. This is consistent with Lacan's designation of identity as "orthopaedic,"<sup>272</sup> explicated by Catherine Clément as "a kind of prosthesis. Something added, something that did not exist at birth that helps you to stand up straight within yourself."<sup>273</sup> Indeed, in the context of "demands" which are articulated through the Symbolic order of language (as opposed to desire, which is always what is lacking, left unarticulated), such an orthopaedic prop of identification is clearly necessary. Yet as Kristeva has shown, the danger of using the prop of woman-as-identity is that it props up patriarchy. She illustrates this in discussion of three 'generations' of feminism, and their relations to the socio-symbolic order.

Kristeva describes her first 'generation' of feminists as "existential feminists," whose project, centred on 'equal rights', is "deeply rooted in the socio-political life of nations."<sup>274</sup> Their demands are "all part of the logic of identification with certain values: not with the ideological (these

are combatted, and rightly so, as reactionary) but, rather, with the logical and ontological values of a rationality dominant in the nation-state."<sup>275</sup> Thus she points to the insufficiency of the 'ideological' as the only site or point of intervention. The second generation, by contrast, is characterised by "an exacerbated distrust of the entire political dimension."<sup>276</sup> Their project is one of seeking to "give a language to the intra-subjective and corporeal experiences left mute by culture in the past," and of "demanding recognition of an irreducible identity, without equal in the opposite sex."<sup>277</sup> Thus, "the struggle is no longer concerned with the quest for equality but, rather, with difference and specificity."<sup>278</sup>

The first 'generation' could be described as supporting patriarchal structures by engaging with and seeking participation in them, while the second supports patriarchy more by omission than commission, by leaving it untouched. Kristeva advocates a third position, one which it could be said articulates a relation between the first two. It is one in which

having started with the idea of difference, [this] feminism will be able to break free of its belief in Woman . . . so as to channel this demand for difference into each and every element of the female whole, and, finally to bring out the singularity of each woman, and beyond this, her multiplicities, her plural languages . . . .<sup>279</sup>

It is a position which sees the dichotomy man/woman in the sense of "an opposition between two rival entities" as one belonging to metaphysics, and seeks "the demassification of the problematic of *difference*,"

not in the name of some reconciliation . . . but in order that the struggle, the implacable difference, the violence be conceived in the very place where it operates with the maximum intransigence, in other words, in personal and sexual identity itself, so as to make it disintegrate in its very nucleus.<sup>280</sup>

Indeed it is a position which takes account of the function of the unconscious in the constitutively split subject. Subjectivity as *place* in the Symbolic is held in constant relation with the *process* of its provisional, temporary, contingent assumption: "This process could be summarized as an interiorization of the founding separation of the socio-symbolic contract, as an introduction of its cutting edge into the very interior of every identity whether subjective, sexual, ideological, or so forth."<sup>281</sup>

If the identity of the subject is constituted in a "line of fiction,"<sup>282</sup> then it is a necessary fiction. But it is also necessarily a fiction. Thus ultimately

we return to the apparent contradiction between the determined and the determining subject, and note that the split subject of psychoanalysis holds these positions in a constant and productive tension. Because of the constant vacillation between the determined and the determining positions (within the social, and with access to language), the psychoanalytic subject is never entirely a 'subject' in either sense. It could be described as a "perpetual oscillation between fading and return."<sup>283</sup> As has been argued, subjectivity is both the *place* within the Symbolic, and the *process* of coming into being, which in never settling into stasis, could be termed *placelessness*. It is only partial and is mediated by the unconscious which is formed through the particular subject's lived relations to the social order, his or her individual history. This enables the subject to legislate between proffered subject-positions, assuming or rejecting particular positions, and not necessarily in a conscious way. In fact, the subject is never outside of the process of ideology. Thus, as Smith points out,

it becomes necessary to propose that 'choice' or conscious calculation is possible only as the by-product of the human agent's negotiation among and between particular subject positions. Resistance is indeed produced by and within the ideological. Where discourses actually take hold of or produce the so-called 'subject', they also enable agency and resistance.<sup>284</sup>

In other words, the subject is subject to and of multiple discourses and social formations which are not always non-contradictory, and never cohere into a whole, undivided individual. No subject fully inhabits any one discourse, and no discourse is fully sufficient to any subject.

The terms of the post-colonial obsession with identity therefore need to be problematised, so that the issue is not seen as one of the dismantling of false imposed identities in favour of true natural or essential identities. Rather, it is the crisis of *identity as a concept*, one which functions in complicity with the politics of both patriarchy and imperialism, and which has informed conceptions of even the post-colonial nation.

### 1. V. The Interplay of Place and Placelessness in the Subject of Post-colonial Fiction. ✓

The emphasis in this chapter so far has been on subjectivity as a psychical process. However, the articulation of subjectivity through the

'self' requires an operation of power upon the body. It is the body which, through the mirror stage, is unified against difference, before subjectivity alienates it as difference, when it is inscribed in language and in the socio-symbolic order. Meaning thus separates from being, or unmediated plenitude. Identity, as has been shown, is spatial and relational, and resistance to interpellations by ideology into pre-designated places or positions within the Symbolic, similarly takes the form of bodily, or spatial transgressions. Using the notion of the productive dialectic between place (the determined subject) and placelessness (subjectivity in process), I consider a selection of texts from the mid-1980s which illustrate some of these situations and problems of post-colonial identity. These include Kate Grenville's *Lilian's Story*,<sup>285</sup> Sally Morgan's *My Place*,<sup>286</sup> and Aritha Van Herk's *No Fixed Address*.<sup>287</sup>

*Lilian's Story* can be read as a post-colonial questioning of Australian identity through its exposure of the complicity between the discourses of nation and patriarchy. Post-colonial literature frequently demonstrates the problematisation of nation and gender constructs in former colonies, but *Lilian's Story* links the two by showing nation as a gendered concept, while gender structures the body as 'nation'.<sup>288</sup> The text begins with the coincidence of two en-gendering events: the legal beginnings of nationhood through Federation, and the apocalyptic birth of a child. The wild appearance of the words on the page suggests the initial fragmentary body which becomes formed during the mirror stage, or in national terms, through federation which effects both unification and repression. That the child is a girl is unexpected, but does not halt completely the military march of patriarchal national history. She is appropriately named Lilian Una, which through the common association of *lily* and *white*, and *una* and *one*, or *unification*, does not require too great an effort to be recognised as an allegorical naming. This is the first indication that body and nation are to be read simultaneously as social constructs, and as co-inciding within Lilian. Moreover, we learn that she has been engendered by Albion, whose name is the archaic appellation for Britain, and perhaps also suggests an association with the Latin *Albus*, meaning white. Thus we have further evidence for a reading of Lilian's life as an alternative national narrative, beginning with the imposition of Britain, or imperial patriarchy on a silent mother-land. It has been shown earlier how Nation has been constructed as Self. Now, on the other hand, the process whereby Lilian is gendered female and submitted to the laws of social division,

categorisation and position, constitutes her body as nation. Just as nations are defined by boundaries that are militarily effected and protected, and which function to construct 'national' notions of 'same' and 'different' within identitarian thinking, gender structures the body according to socially and ideologically read and sanctioned boundaries which similarly divide according to notions of 'same' and 'different'. In other words, the engendering of the subject is inseparable from the subject's assumption of a sexual identity. Lilian is interpellated into a complex of both mutually supporting and cross-cutting discourses, some of which she inhabits and others which she resists or rewrites. These construct or attempt to construct her place within social formations such as the family, the social class, her age group and her gender.

The text is somewhat ironically structured around gender-age colligations, the sections being called respectively "A Girl," "A Young Lady," and "A Woman." However, within these structuring categories she narrates an on-going struggle between the expectations of familial and social forces that she will fully and coherently inhabit each of these positions in its proper progression, and her own conscious and unconscious refusals to be so interpellated. In her earliest narrated memory, Lilian is told by her mother, "*Alma is a maid . . . . And I am a lady. You will be a lady one day, but now you are a little girl.*"<sup>289</sup> Here and throughout the text, subject positions within social class and gender constructs are asserted and reasserted, and assume the plenitude of identity through their adherence to the illusion of singular coherence. Strategies for ensuring their coherence and order include holding up the following stage as a model to which to aspire, so that as a little girl she is expected to behave as a lady, and as a "young lady," her choices and actions are determined by her father's beliefs about appropriate ones for a "woman" (see 75). So these identities are not merely descriptive in function; rather, they serve as short-hand for acceptable and expected social behaviour, paralleling the discourse of development to maturity within which nations have been contained. In other words, they are ideologically pre-determined articulations of, as well as forms of, subjectivity. Lilian's early tendency to transgress acceptable codes of behaviour for her gender and social position result in frequent reprovals and reassertions of social propriety: "*Lilian, do not bang your feet like that,* Mother exclaimed. *What do you think you are doing?* I tried explaining, *I am being Father, Mother,* but she did not hear, only said, *A lady glides, Lilian*" (5). And later she is told, "*A lady does not*

*hurtle, Lilian dear*" (15). Clearly it is not simply codes of social propriety Lilian transgresses, but the boundaries of gender definition itself, which define and restrict patterns of behaviour or ideologically 'available' positions. Apart from "being Father," she is labelled a tomboy by one of her mother's friends (9) when she displays a pebble she found in the bay. In school, she angers her teacher by drawing a woman wearing trousers, something Lilian has encountered in spying on the eccentric and socially marginalised Miss Gash, but so outlandish a notion that the teacher cannot recognise it for what it is (52).

The 'nation' of gender places boundaries or borders around definitions of self and behaviour, keeping 'self' and 'same' within its proper place. But from childhood on, Lilian breaks these boundaries, in her refusal to remain contained within the spaces designated for her. As a small child, she enters her father's study, sacrosanct domain of male control of the signifier, and an institutionalisation of the function of language, within patriarchy, of determining and locating the female body as *outside*. However, Lilian wants to insert her body into language. When she is a young lady her father declares that "*Women do not need education . . . . Women's aptitudes lie in other directions*" (75); she then makes use of the fact that "it was easy to convince father that I was not much of a woman"(75) to validate her entry into another supposedly male domain. As a growing young girl and a young woman she cannot be contained in her bedroom, and makes nightly escapes to walk through the countryside. At tennis parties she spends the time up a tree with Duncan, another outsider, who regards her as a mate and preferable for not being "*one of the pretty ones*" (88). As an adult, she rejects the material security that would have been available to someone of her class, and wanders the streets and public transport system, quoting Shakespeare for a shilling to the public, and sleeping under a bridge with her old friend, F.J. Stroud, now also one of the placeless people. However, the spatial transgression that remains consistent throughout childhood and into adulthood, and is scarcely attributable to conscious resistance of class and gender discourses, is the breaking of the boundaries of normal, or at least normally attractive physical size.

With Alma's complicity, Lilian eats insatiably, increasing in size until she can at last tell herself "*I am a fat girl*" (17). She remains fat throughout adolescence and into adulthood, though she is almost always physically



strong, and is sometimes even admired for her impressive bulk. Similarly, while it is not clear that she consciously sets out to become fat, it is clear that she rejects offers from Ursula and her aunt Kitty to help her lose the fat and attain a body more in keeping with normal expectations. "You are a good friend", she tells Ursula, "*but this is what I have chosen*" (78). This is because Lilian's body is the site of struggles for recognition and power. Her bulk prevents her from submitting to the status of unimportance available to her as female in patriarchal ideology. She rejects Ursula's offer to help her lose weight with the explanation that then she would be "*mediocre*", and she is "*too arrogant to be mediocre*" (78). Thus Lilian's body represents a challenge to phallogentric denial of its desires and multiplicities, and to patriarchal discourse as dis-embodied. Throughout her childhood and adult life Lilian says and does things to attract attention, assuring her 'self' through the recognition of others, reassuring herself by assuring others that they will always remember her. Yet the impulse to do this, to resist feminine oblivion, is something even she does not necessarily consciously understand or enact. When her father has died, she tells her brother, "*He hated me. . . . He did not hate you, John said, wiser than me after so long. He just thought you did not matter*" (171).

At the same time as her body is caught up in these psycho-social power structures, it is through her body that her father exercises more directly physical power over her. When the attempts to restrict the freedom and range of her movement fail she receives beatings; but it is also through her body that she 'resists'. Specifically, her fat serves as a protection, covering or insulating her against her uncertain place within the Symbolic. She grows so large that there is too much of her for her father (18). When eventually he can no longer cope with her size, his rage cannot conceal his fear (128). Thus in terms of the parent-child relationship which sanctions control through punishment, he is disarmed.

Though it is the locus of the exercise of power, the body is an ambivalent site from which to mount resistance. This is because power constructs the body, and it is never outside of the exercise of power which unifies and fragments it, holding it within systems of meaning which are ideologically determined. Thus there can be no resistance predicated on the liberation of the body from ideology. While Lilian allows her body to become larger and larger to resist patriarchal attempts at containment, a

celebratory gesture of resistance, she locates her resistance to that extent in the very object of patriarchal oppression. Her body is the site of difference, that which in terms of the specular economy of phallogocentrism, constitutes her as other, the unspeakable unspoken of phallogocentric subjectivity. Lilian's sexuality cannot even be spoken within patriarchal discourse other than in relation to the masculine norm. Even her mother, attempting to explain the facts of life, only manages to say, "*Your brother is a boy, and girls are not like boys*" (97). Thus Lilian is the 'self-constituting other' of patriarchy, the negation or the no-sex of masculine sexuality, whose discourse interpellates her into the function of mirror through which her father can recognise himself by forcing her recognition of him. It is through her status as a woman that her father can now force her recognition of him through his exercise of power over her. He has increasingly relished signs of her sexual maturity, lugubriously warning her of the attentions of other men, and chastising her in sexual terms. Sexuality and punishment converge, ultimately serving the purpose of forcing Lilian to recognise her father's manhood and mastery:

*You are a tight little vixen*, Father said as if his teeth were clenched on the words. *A tight and seamy vixen*. I sat staring at the wood grain and at my hand lying on it, hearing Father breathe above my head and feeling the heat of his body against the side of my arm as he stood over me. His nearness for such a long time made me itch but I could not move, and sat feeling the blood pound in my face, and a great heat and congestion radiating from Father with his dark hidden trousers at eye level. (113)

Having hidden to avoid accompanying her father and John to the Agricultural Show, where she could expect to see for herself her father's information that "*a pig has an organ of generation that is curved, and as sharp as a knife*," and where they are exhorted to "*remember the animal in us*," Lilian returns to explore the empty house room by room, barred only from her father's solidly locked study. During her exploration, she examines the different images of herself in various mirrors, as well as her image in a photograph of rare beauty in a pocket in one of her father's suits. However, she replaces it, and in front of one of the mirrors, Lilian takes off her clothes. But while gazing at her body she is interrupted by her father, whom she had believed still to be out. In an act for which Lilian is never able to find the words, her father shatters the ecstasy of narcissistic plenitude she imagines she has attained in relation to her mirror image by imposing himself sexually upon her. Her body is reduced by the rape to an

object in her father's field, her inability to articulate the experience confirming her lack of an active place in the patriarchal Symbolic order of language. However, the separation from her body which she experiences as a violation also provides her with the means of resistance. She rationalises, "Whatever had happened . . . had happened to a mass of flesh called Lilian, not to me" (121). The refusal to identify body and self also amounts to a refusal to recognise her father's power. She retains the fragmentation of the body which locates her outside of language and outside of identity. Further, when he has her incarcerated in a mental institution, Lilian discovers the liberation that an absence of mirrors can mean: "Without a mirror it is possible to be anyone" (151-2). Thus she is able to continue experiencing the body's multiplicity repressed by the structures of phallogentric subjectivity, although she is inevitably still contained within patriarchy's institutions. Lilian's identity has been experienced by her, within the interpellations ideologically available to a woman within patriarchy, as oppressive. Therefore, whether or not she ever comes to understand what he did to her, Lilian's life-long assertions of her virginity constitute ambivalent acts of resistance, as do her refusals of subsequent sexual relationships. Lilian therefore uses and refuses discursive representations and fixations of self.

Language can now be seen as the site of struggles for power and the process through which resistance may be enacted.<sup>290</sup> It is in fact foregrounded in the text as the commodity over which Albion claims sole right, naming and defining the world as he will. And it is this patriarchal - - and colonising -- assumption that Lilian's bodily transgressions resist. But Lilian's body, constituted in discourse, cannot provide an unmediated site of resistance. Freed from patriarchy, Lilian's body would be no less subject to what Althusser would term 'ideology in general'.<sup>291</sup> It would simply be some other form of ideology. However, Lilian's negotiation of language and the body's transgressions of it, demonstrate that women cannot opt simply for being/body rather than meaning/subjectivity, and pivotally, language, but must continue to disrupt meaning and its constitution of the body in identity from within. From early in the text it is clear that Albion's mastery over and through language is in crisis. His hollow facts echo unanchored to any meaning. Nor can he make them signify in the supposed writing of his book. As his facts proliferate they are clearly beyond Albion's control. While they silence his family, this silence is a measure of his decreasing rather than increasing power. John attempts

to drown out his father's facts at mealtimes by eating only raw and very noisy food. Similarly, his discursive silence and aspirations to deafness constitute further acts of resistance to his own interpellation into patriarchal dominance of the signifier. Even when he is overtly hailed by his father with the words "*Now that you are a man*" (135), John remains sublimely blank. The burden of Albion's facts finally overwhelms even him and he becomes an absent invalid. Norah, his passive, largely inarticulate wife exists in a general state of silence in relation to her husband, broken only by fragmented or incomplete sentences attempting resistance to his demands -- "*Too unwell. Later, please, Albion*" (15) --, and in defence of her children, resistance to his bullying -- "*Gently, Albion, she did not mean*" (16). Normally, her speech in his presence is drowned out or ignored. However, during the time of his (discursive) absence, Norah gains markedly in strength and articulateness, while John resumes a normal diet.

Before the 'incident' of her father's sexual imposition (of his mastery), Lilian has always tried to meet and challenge her father on discursive ground. Her fascination with his study and her love of recitation are her early attempts to assert a legitimate place for herself within the Symbolic realm of discourse. Her father's attempts to silence her include turning his study into the place of punishment for her, reinforcing the association of language and control, and later 'drowning' the book of Shakespeare from which she recites. But just as this gesture occurs too late to be effective, Lilian has also already learned to use the tool of language in both defence and attack. She very specifically turns Albion's own weapon against him when she points out that his declaration that she is "*no daughter of mine*" (128), carries the logical implication "*Then you are a cuckold*" (128), evoking the transgression of paternal Law by maternal desire.

Ultimately then, Lilian resists discursive interpellation into her proper place as a woman within patriarchy, joining the other 'placeless' women -- Miss Gash who lives on the borderlines of traditional definitions of male and female (see 61), assigned to social marginality and emblemising her wish not to be fixed but to keep moving in her postage stamp dress; and Aunt Kitty, the "happy widow" (10), considered by her brother to be, like all women, the work of the devil. But gender is not the only patriarchal nation Lilian refuses. At the beginning of the discussion I referred to *Lilian's Story* as a rewriting of Australian national identity, the version of

national identity deriving from the values of British imperialism. Throughout the text one can trace the weakening of the powers of the British Empire over the colonial nation. Miss Vine, the schoolteacher born in England, glorifies Imperial history and the idealised lives of the kings and queens only to be faced with the deflatingly tangential or marginal (marginalising) questions of Lilian and the other Australian schoolchildren. At the same time, Miss Vine's hatred of the sounds of Australian birds' laughter evokes a kind of paranoia regarding not merely her superiority but indeed her place in the land and landscape to which she cannot adjust (30). Later, as a young woman going to picture theatres, Lilian resents hearing "someone else's National Anthem" and other "foreign bombast" (139). But the fortunes of British imperialism in Australia are most strikingly embodied in Albion, whose military bearing and violent behaviour represent another fundamental mode of imperialism, and the forging of the new nation out of it. Throughout the text, he too is increasingly challenged and seen as irrelevant, while his perception of his decreasing power also manifests itself in paranoia, in which having placed himself as the centre of consciousness, others exist only in relation to him, a relation with externally-located difference which is intrinsically threatening to the sovereignty of the self. This expresses itself in personal terms, when he regards Kitty's behaviour as a direct slight against him (16), and in racial or cultural terms, when Lilian's state represents to him *"an example of the degeneracy of the white races"* (167). But as his powers decline, Lilian comes to recognise the emptiness of such phrases (169), and the advent of the Depression in Australia is narratively associated with Lilian's recognition of the need to *"invent reality anew"* (169). The ideological discourse concerning Australia's relationship with Britain is thrown into crisis along with that of the relationship between Lilian and Albion. Lilian's solution is to invent a *"lack of connection"* with her father (169). But this lack of connection is, precisely, an invention. Although war breaks out after the death of her father, there is another narrative parallel in the account of Australia's military and domestic aid to Britain, reacknowledging the relationship, and Lilian's acknowledgement of her own ties to her father (171). She has found that *"With Father gone the world lacked edges and went on, grey forever into the distance"* (170).

Thus we come to the ambivalence of the project of regendering nation. Nation and gender are isomorphic as patriarchal constructs, and so to

replace one gender with another in constructing nation does not change the essentially patriarchal way of thinking nation. What then of the argument that Lilian rewrites nation through the female body? Again the body can only be discursively read, and it is not possible, and even less helpful, to posit an essentially female body liberated from all ideological and discursive mediation. But Lilian's resistance to specifically patriarchal values in her bodily refusal to be contained, without the positing of an essential femininity as counter-discourse culminates in a clearly resisting strategy. Lilian's body can be read as the creation of a way of thinking nation with permeable and unfixed boundaries, celebratory of the difference not without but within. However, just as the historical ties with British imperialism cannot be denied, there is a need to recognise that any rewriting of nation is a rewriting within the ideological mediation of discourse, and that any assertion of identity is only a provisional construct, a temporary suture in the dialectic of place and placelessness.

Lilian chooses placelessness most importantly in living her life as a constant recreation of herself in language, effecting a continual dialectic between the Imaginary and Symbolic functions in the constructing of identity. In other words, she rejects identity as a fixity or a truth, and constantly creates it as process. However, the politics of this strategy must be recognised, and through the encounter with the absent voice of the aboriginal people, we will see that such politics can be challenged by those who assert another place from which to resist imperialism. Such a challenge is articulated in Sally Morgan's *My Place*. While *Lilian's Story* foregrounded the notion of place as primarily restrictive, thus positing placelessness as the appropriate site of resistance, *My Place* demonstrates placelessness as one of the principal conditions of Aboriginal oppression. It is therefore necessary to retrieve a sense of place in order to restore the productive dialectic of identity as process.

By means of the presentation of multiple perspectives through a number of generations, the individual stories which make up this collective autobiography combine to historicise the fact of oppression and displacement, at the same time historicising forms of resistance and complicity, so that the ambivalence of any 'position' is emphasised. The ambivalence is embodied, through the Milroys and their relations, in the particular placelessness of the half-caste or mixed blood Aborigines. Sally grows up on the edge of both worlds, and experiences, though she does not

understand, conflicting interpellations into conflicting subject positions and social orders. The Imaginary plenitude (or lack of difference) Sally has experienced within her family is disturbed and then shattered upon wider social contact through school. Thus through school she accedes to a position as subject within the social order in which she has already been pre-constituted, with its articulations of identity and difference. However, as she becomes increasingly aware, the opposition is not simply between home-as-same and school-as-different. Rather, her position in both places comes to consist of contradictions and conflicts, so that difference and its disavowal strategically define her place. Homi Bhabha, whose work draws on psychoanalytic formulations of subjectivity, has described colonial discourse as "an apparatus that draws on the recognition and disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences."<sup>292</sup> This is reflected in Sally's experience. While complying with a teacher's request that the class draw pictures of their mothers and fathers, Sally, having drawn hers naked, finds that her perception of reality or normality is not that taken for granted by the teacher or the others in the class (19). She is expected here, and much later when in art class she is ridiculed for the lack of 'perspective', horizon and proportion in her drawing (97), to conform to the dominant view of reality. The destruction of her childhood drawing and the verbal destruction of her later art represent a call for the obliteration of difference.

At the same time, her difference is repeatedly asserted from the point of view of the valorised dominant culture. At school she is prejudicially singled out as the student who will definitely fail (109), and the sort of pupil of whom unacceptable behaviour can be expected (88). Similarly, while being expected to accept the beliefs and practices of Christianity, something with which Sally complies willingly and sincerely, she is forced to recognise her immutable difference and inadequacy in relation to a white Christian friend. That friend's father, a deacon of the church, asks Sally not to continue mixing with her because, she is told -- as if this were an understanding they share -- "You're a bad influence, you must realise that" (103). At home, though, things are no less confusing. After starting school, perceptions of difference gradually infiltrate Sally's vision, though the 'value' of this difference is not consistent. She does not initially have any sense or understanding of this difference in terms of her own disadvantage or inferiority. On the contrary, it is she who feels sorry for other children who do not share her environment (23), and she takes the

observation that her family is different amusedly as a compliment. However, after a humiliating accident in class she says "I felt different from the other children in my class. They were the spick-and-span brigade, and I, the grubby offender" (26). Later though, her grade three perception that she "came from the rough-and-tumble part" of Manning (37) does not amount to an awareness of disadvantage. She feels privileged by the family closeness borne of economic necessity (38).

Through her grandmother Daisy, Sally has learned a respect for wildlife and a love of the bush (32; 56). However, the values and practices of her grandmother differ and increasingly conflict with those from school, and more generally the dominant culture of the society in which she lives. Thus her study of science causes Sally to question her grandmother's understandings of natural phenomena such as the weather (60), and ways of dealing with germs and illness (85). Yet Sally's position is influenced not only by her attempts to be "rational" (85), consistent with her study of science, and its role in the construction of rational subject-citizens in the modern nation-state, but by a refusal to hear her grandmother's explanations in the face of her desire to identify with the social practices and norms of her schoolfriends. Thus her refusal to have onions placed in her bedroom to prevent illness is expressed in the objection that "'Steph's room doesn't stink the way mine does'" (85). They clash frequently, with Sally's mother Gladys always on the border between them. Sally is often mystified by her grandmother's actions and utterances, and with no obvious paradigm within which to locate and explain these differences, Sally initially dismisses them (67). Later she attributes them to her grandmother's age (78), and even a certain deliberate inter-generational antagonism. At the same time, the expectation that Sally and her brothers and sisters not only conform but succeed in white society is one held by her family as much as by that society. Thus the experiences of Sally's early life demonstrate the ambivalent placement of the colonial subject in discourse, where the disavowal of difference is in constant tension with the production of difference. And difference itself is less a term with inherent and predictable meaning than an articulation which attains meaning in its specific application from specific positions, whether in the ambivalent imposition of the colonising gaze, or the ambivalent strategies of resistance.



Sally is a locus of difference in a dominant culture which valorises identity, and though she is not consciously aware of it, identity becomes her object of desire. As a very young child, she is impressed by her teacher's manner of stressing and lingering on the word 'I' in her every utterance, emphasising the strength and security of the teacher's sense of identity (25). At the same time, Sally perceives herself as a "non-descript brown face" in the class (25), with nothing to distinguish or secure her identity. Ironically, she unconsciously and almost indiscernibly passes over the very construct which will dominate the question of her identity. As Bhabha says of colonial power and its operation through discourse, "The difference of the object of discrimination is at once visible and natural -- colour as the cultural/political sign of inferiority or degeneracy, skin as its natural 'identity.'"<sup>293</sup>

Sally does not at this time see any significance in having a brown face. But schoolchildren begin to ask what country Sally comes from, puzzling Sally who had always thought "we were the same as them." The options considered by the children are Italian, Greek and Indian, and when told by her mother to say they are Indian, Sally is satisfied, even excited at the "exotic" sound (38). She reflects, "It was good finally to have an answer and it satisfied our playmates. They could quite believe we were Indian, they just didn't want us pretending we were Aussies when we weren't" (39). The range of nationalities suggested in opposition to the 'Aussie' identity demonstrates how deeply the Aboriginal 'other' has been repressed in the constitution of Australian nationhood. However, one day Sally returns from school to find her grandmother crying and saying "You bloody kids don't want me, you want a bloody white grandmother, I'm black. Do you hear, black, black, black!" (97). Sally realises that this is the first time she has been conscious of her grandmother's colour, and that logically, she must be black too. For Sally, colour was not something she was conscious of; it had to be, in Bhabha's words, *produced* or processed as visible.<sup>294</sup> As she learns from her personal history, and from what she uncovers in her explorations of the past, colour is a pervasive yet again ambivalent measure of difference, simultaneously and arbitrarily defining and denying identity.

Initially dislocated by the information that they are Aboriginal -- being-self alienated by knowledge of self -- Sally and her sister Jill can only articulate their race in terms of received ideas and attitudes, abusive labels

and stereotypes. Their personal ambiguity and ambivalence is demonstrated when Jill asks, "Can you tell me one good thing about being an Abo?" Sally answers, "Well I don't know much about them" (98). And persisting in the third person, she makes an ambivalent identification: "They like animals, don't they? We like animals" (98). Jill's disidentification is more persistent and clearly pragmatic. "It's a terrible thing to be Aboriginal. Nobody wants to know you. You can be Indian, Dutch, Italian, anything, but not Aboriginal" (98).

However, it is important to understand that oppression does not construct singular subjects. This is illustrated in *My Place* through differences between family members in degree and type of interpellation by white and Aboriginal traditions, or the balance between conformity and rebellion. Thus Jill concedes to Sally, "I suppose it's all right for someone like you, you don't care what people think. You don't need anyone, but I do!" (98). Sally's efforts to suture the split between her perceiving and her perceived selves are predicated on a form of strategic acceptance of the identity of difference producing her within the dominant discourse in order to effect a resistant rewriting of the terms from another place. *My Place* is the resultant record of identity in process, that process taking Sally, and her family, back both geographically and historically into the lives of her Uncle Arthur, her mother Gladys, and eventually her grandmother Daisy. There follows a trans-generational and complex unfolding of the ambivalence of historical forms of colonial recognition and disavowal of difference, the resistant strategies and complicities, the effects of identification and disidentification. These differences are partly explainable in terms of the different material forms that colonial discrimination and oppression have taken through time.

Much of the initial difficulty Sally faces in finding out about the past relates to the secrecy maintained by her mother, and particularly her grandmother, about it. In different ways, each has disidentified with her Aboriginality. Daisy in many ways complies with colonialist policies and practices of assimilation when she 'whites herself out'<sup>295</sup> into invisibility. Although eventually found to be able, she never speaks her native language, and refuses to allow Arthur to call her by her Aboriginal name. She physically absents herself during visits to the house, particularly visits by anyone in authority. Thus she attempts to escape the discriminatory gaze which constitutes her as black, as Aboriginal. Gladys's resistance is

more a matter of mimicry, wearing the white mask ambivalently proffered by colonisation's "civilising mission," so that, as Bhabha puts it, she is "almost the same but not quite/almost the same but not white."<sup>296</sup> Her desire for her children to do well, to have a doctor in the family, is her desire to overcome the discriminatory production of material oppression. But this is in constant tension with her lived relations to the cultural gaze which produces her as a visibly colonial subject -- the "not quite."

In making both physical and discursive returns to the land from which her grandmother and mother came, Sally traces the condition of placelessness -- invisibility, not quite/white -- back to the impact of the colonial "production" of half-caste children (including Arthur, Daisy and Gladys) by white station owners or station hands. Such children were defined by their paternity as sufficiently white to be taken from their Aboriginal mothers,<sup>297</sup> but by their maternity as sufficiently black never to have a place in white society beyond servant or farm-hand status, and usually they were sent away altogether. Families were split because of the practices and policies of colonial white government and society, and placelessness was a real material condition for many. But, perniciously, families were split also because of the fetishisation of skin colour, so that "light" and "dark" Aborigines received different treatment, and recognising this, pragmatically valorised lightness.

Daisy and Gladys have been offered historical, geographical, cultural and racial placelessness by the Law of the Father represented by colonial power and within colonial discourse. Yet to an extent they use this by attempting to effect their own invisibility to the colonial gaze to resist its defining and circumscribing power. But in *My Place*, Sally experiences then comes to understand the cost of this, and strategically re-identifies with her Aboriginal heritage to recuperate a sense of place.<sup>298</sup> Focusing on journeys and questions, and answers which raise more questions, the meaning of Aboriginal as racial or cultural identity is never fixed or settled. No ahistorical or unhistoricised claims about Aboriginal identity are made, but through historicisation, the productive interplay of place and placelessness is restored. In textualising her search for place, Sally uses the means available to her as an educated post-colonial woman, countering the very invisibility and silence which left her the object but not the subject of identity. Yet because there is no 'I' other than in relation to, or in interplay with the regard of the other -- the system of social and

familial structures that surround her -- she articulates a search for identity that is never specified, but remains implicit in the collective stories of family, past and place. Textually, the cost and the benefit of the maintenance of productive dialectic is the refusal, in fact the impossibility of both origin and closure. There is a circularity in that many of the questions and observations with which Sally's quest has ostensibly begun have only been made possible by the process of the text itself. Just as her "blackness" had to be produced as visible, so were many other issues of history and identity relocated into her past *after* the process of their construction. Similarly, the bird-call at the end of the text marks a beginning rather than the end that the death of her grandmother might suggest. Her identity, and that of her family, will continue to evolve, the process/text marking both a post-colonial discursive and active resistance to the arrested, fixated form of identity available in the stereotypes of colonial discourse.

Therefore, while *Lilian's Story* focused on placelessness as the strategic escape of and challenge to the fixities of place which attempt to interpellate her as a white, post-federation woman, *My Place* recounts the historical and cultural placelessness of Aboriginal people within colonial society and colonial discourse, and offers the recuperation of place as a necessary element in the interplay, not with placelessness determined as colonial fixity, but redefined as post-colonial process.

Aritha Van Herk's *No Fixed Address* is a narrative of complex interrelations between place and placelessness. Indeed the text itself enacts that continual tension. On the one hand it narrates, or contains in narrative, Arachne Manteia's life as a series of transgressions of, or resistances to, networks of social containment and interpellations into proffered subject-positions. On the other hand, Arachne escapes containment in and by that very narrative. It is, in fact, her absence which founds and motivates the text. Arachne's transgressions are predominantly spatial, emphasising the idea that she is not *there* -- in any place or position -- with the fixity that the socio-symbolic order desires. Yet she is not simply 'outside' the social. Without some relation to its institutions of psychical, social, and bodily containment, she could not effect her refusals.

From an early age, Arachne resists the bodily containments of home and family. One of her earliest memories is when, as a toddler, she climbs

out of her crib, knowing it is "Bad. She wasn't supposed to climb out."<sup>299</sup> She grows to understand that she shares her mother's dread of entrapment, a realisation prompted by her mother's "lock[ing] her in the high-fenced backyard while she went off to Bingo or to a shoe sale" (41). For Lanie, it was the dread of being "stuck at home with [a] brat" (56), while Arachne, at the age of three "climbed the fence" (41), and began a regular pattern of escape, only refining it by -- confining it within -- her growing sense of the limited time available to effect the gesture before she must return home to avoid punishment, but also to enable the gesture to be repeated. In other words, without acknowledging 'home', her 'running away' would have no meaning.

However, the home and family shape and control not only the body's spheres of movement: the family serves a socialising function which also determines identity within the social order, functioning to ensure an ideological continuity from one generation to the next to effect the preservation of that order. Nevertheless, the ability of the subject to be entirely determined by the Symbolic through interpellations into Imaginary (ideological) identifications is compromised and occasionally thwarted by the functioning of the unconscious, the constitutive split which both holds and activates residues of the particular subject's lived relation to the Symbolic, in other words, the subject's history. In Arachne's case, for example, her relation to her mother is a negative one: "Lanie's small obsessions have had their influence on Arachne; she refuses to carry a purse, she refuses to wear a nightgown, she refuses to thin her rather shaggy eyebrows. She refuses and refuses all the impositions of childhood and mothers" (40). Importantly, such refusals do not *place* her outside the institution of the family or the effects of influence, but transgresses their acknowledged determinations.

Arachne cannot be contained within the confines of her 'proper' gender. As a child, she was "a snot-nosed kid running around the neighbourhood after dark . . . . kicking over garbage cans [in] a fight that is still neighbourhood legend" (78). When refused a paper-round because she is a girl, Toto takes her to a barber who "cut her hair short at the sides with a cowlick in front" (178), a change that delights Arachne, and Toto tells her "'You're a boy and you're twelve years old, got it'" (178). As a bus driver, "Arachne wishes that she looked like a man. Indeed, Arachne wishes that she were a man. Driving seems so much easier for them,

reaching, turning the wheel" (67-8). Even working as a sales representative she finds herself an unexpected 'imposter' in a male world. Attending the Ladies' Comfort sales conferences, she finds that "Her fellow sales representatives are what one expects panty salesmen to be like -- not crude, but crass. Middle-aged men who look like drummers, who carry Ladies' Comfort panties along with other saleable items: Scotch tape and candy bars" (212).

Her act of 'liberating' the old man Josef, whose tyrannical daughter Anna treated him like a child, controlling whom he should and should not see, and whether, when, and where he should go out, is largely an act of identification. She reflects that "her sympathy for Josef is more like a recognition, an indication of what she might become, a reminder of the ragged child that Raki was" (197). Josef's own transgressions of his place in relation to his family and to his social position, a loss of meaning with old age which earns him the label "senile" from his dispassionate teenage grandson, result in his placement in a home. As the grandson explains to Arachne, "Mom couldn't keep track of him anymore. If she turned her back he'd be gone, wandering down the street" (224). Arachne's sexual encounters with Josef liberate his body from the socially defined restrictions which paradoxically infantilise him *and* regard sexuality as inappropriate because of his old age. Later, she liberates him from the old people's home where, he tells her, "They tie me at night. Like a baby's crib, the sides" (226).

The social institution of class interpellates the subject into a position which shapes the sense of self and constrains the choices and movements of that self both within and beyond the family sphere. Arachne "knows she is working-class. She has never thought of her narrow life as disabled. She is concerned with survival, self-protection" (76). Yet she becomes aware of another world, which fragments the unity of self and place she has experienced in relation to class to the extent that she regards it as "'the real world', certainly the respectable world, in which she is an imposter" (103). One of the first experiences of this sense of being an outsider in relation to the valorised middle-class world occurs in her traumatic attempt to buy a bra. She gives up "attempting to negotiate the wilderness of lingerie in a large department store" (121), and tries a small shop staffed by "a hostile-looking teenager" and clerks who "ignored her, not the kind of client they wanted" (121). Arachne confronts, through the gaze of the

clerk who eventually serves her, an alienating image of herself as profoundly out of place. The clerk's "disdainful tone confirmed Arachne's worst fears about herself. She knew she was hopelessly scrubby, hopelessly coarse, and she did not want this contemptuous clerk to see her round breasts constrained by the too-small, puckered child's bra" (122).

However, despite the 'knowledge' of her place, or perhaps because of it, Arachne's interpellation is ambivalent. She is drawn to Thomas with "a sharp gnaw of discontent, a sense of something graspable brushing past. If only she can force her hands into the right shape, she can have it too" (77). This image of having to force her body into shape in order to attain what she wants is an early suggestion of the ambivalence of her wanting, the inconsistency of her 'self' and her 'place', her self and her desire:

This idea is insidious as disease. What does she think? That she can become middle-class, respectable, a wife, a mother, a keeper of clean tea towels and hot casseroles? With her inclinations? With her background?

....

Now she is mooning after the back of an ordinary man wearing a suit and tie, attending an office from eight to five, all the respectable trappings she knows she does not want. (77)

Just as she is aware that Thomas, or what Thomas represents, is graspable only by forcing her hands into the right shape, her sense of belonging in Thomas's world, particularly in relation to his family, appears dependent upon moulding her body, behaviour and feelings into the valorised middle-class norm. It is a norm which is sustained, perpetuated and transmitted through its own self-certitude. It is not simply a *sense* of place, but in structural terms *is* place, against which difference must be defined as placelessness. Thomas's parents know that "he will settle down and marry soon. They are only waiting for the *proper* woman to appear" (120; my emphasis). Thomas's confidence, or sense of self, is such that Arachne's difference does not threaten him. Indeed, it reinforces her position as his self-constituting other. When dinner with his family exposes her (as) difference, it is Arachne who experiences it as traumatic and alienating. In her perception, "[h]er hands are paws," and her pain cannot be alleviated by indignation at a visible, nameable injustice perpetrated by the family. They commit no failure of social grace which could expose a gap between the family's 'self' and its certainty of social place: "The Telfers are kind and considerate but every concession

they make only emphasizes the pit between them . . . . She knows they will suppress their scorn until she is gone; the aristocracy do not criticize lowlife to their faces" (131).

Thomas's attempt to make her feel better both patronises her and unintentionally further highlights their differences. He characterises these differences as mere trappings, superficial in importance and in acquisition. It is with Arachne's scepticism that they embark upon the project of shaping her into the mould of "a respectable woman, or at least the appearance of one. He promises not to make her wear deodorant or shave her legs" (137). Once again, an ambivalent combination of purpose, or conscious agency -- her agreement, her limitations -- and submission to an external determination -- it is seen as Thomas's act -- evokes her transgression of the recognised structures of class and its containing function. Although her "natural inclination to dissemble helps a great deal" (141), she is still a "double-agent," and retains active positions in two incompatible 'places'. She does not become middle-class, but travels through this 'place', arriving only simultaneously with leaving.

Arachne's relationship with Thomas breaks not only class boundaries, but the boundaries imposed by the code of monogamy. Her desire cannot be contained by patriarchal Law. This is no reflection on Thomas, an implication which presupposes that her desire exists in necessary relation to him. It is not because he is a bad lover: "he's a wonderful lover" (174). She tells Thena that her road pick-ups "make him look good by comparison" (174). She is only able to explain her behaviour by rationalising that "I'm happy with Thomas but I'm not used to things coming to me so easily. If I gamble a little, maybe I'll deserve him more" (174-5). Thus, "Arachne is not unkind to Thomas. She is only consistently unfaithful" (62). Yet even the consistency of her unfaithfulness is, in a sense, inconsistent: "Arachne's greatest consistency has always been her faithlessness. Thomas knows but does not reproach her. He watches, waits, knowing it's fear of love that gnaws at the roots of her sleep. He is more than a benefactor, he is her rock. In life she betrays him a hundred times, but in secret, never" (211). Her physical faithlessness does not amount to an emotional rejection of him.

Thomas represents 'place' for Arachne. He has given her a home, provided some order and structure to her life, and in this way "Arachne is



not wrong to credit Thomas with saving her" (103). He is necessary to Arachne, and it is because of her need for Thomas's stability that "She is inclined to return home" (62), but at the same time, home and stability are the very things which require her always to be leaving, to keep moving, and to keep picking up 'road-jockeys'. She finds that "They are neither possessive nor promiscuous . . . . More important, unlike other men, they are able to make love to a woman without in some minuscule but thwarted way subduing her. Pleasure with them is exactly that, not something won or held back" (27). She includes Thomas in this description, but perhaps only because Thomas *is* only one of them. He does not represent the fixity of arrival. The opposite of her ideal is marriage, the ultimate containment of desire and the body by (patriarchal) Law. With regard to marriage, Arachne "can think of no faster way to achieve frigidity. To her the true exchange of hearts within the *bonds* of holy matrimony speaks death to the life of the body" (220; my emphasis).

The Law which contains and retains women's bodies in relation to men's desire functions not only through the overtly institutional bonds of marriage, but before and after that through the institutions and technologies which literally construct and reconstruct women's bodies as desirable to men. The researcher-narrator explains (at) the outset of the text that

*the fashionable woman's shape has always been in a state of constant change . . . . At any given moment the garments covering it have determined the contours of the body; but the final appearance of the outer costume was inevitably controlled by a supporting apparatus beneath . . . . [T]he goal, it is important to remember, [is] to aid physical attractiveness, a standard inevitably decided by men. (9)*

It is literally against this background, and also her own personal trauma associating women's underwear with a rigidity of place which defined her as an outsider, that Arachne refuses underwear. She is consistent in her need for bodily freedom; however it is a further mark of her constitutive inconsistency -- a truer freedom? -- that she is a travelling sales representative for a women's underwear company. If she were consistent to a principle, she would no more sell underwear than wear it, but this would simply locate her in a position, in a counter-ideology, probably feminism. Rather, she is as inconsistent in principle as she is in practice, a fact which differentiates her from her feminist friend, Thena.

Thena's principles are shown to cause her to be unaccepting of difference, even the difference within herself. Her bitter tirades against men appear more as a disavowal of her own thwarted desire. She declares that "she's through with the bastards. 'They're too much trouble for too little return,'" (26) but at the same time she tells Arachne of Thomas, "'You hang onto him Arachne. There's damn few of *them* in the world'" (143-4). Thena despairs that her own daughters, whom she has "enrolled . . . in self-defense courses" and for whom she has insisted on soccer and assertiveness training" abandon these 'advantages' for "ballet lessons and miniskirts, bras and high heels" (143). As far as she is concerned, "They're trying to kill me" (143). Of course, from one perspective, it is not 'difference' that Thena cannot accept, but 'identity' drawn in patriarchal terms. Arachne realises that

Thena's daughters are teenagers, fourteen and sixteen. They are normal teenagers; they do not want their mother's bitterness. They want to be like everyone else. Arachne remembers that desire. She had it too but she learned very quickly its impossibility, that she was not the same, would never be the same. There was nothing she could do about her difference, nothing to do but exploit it, call attention to the fact that she was crossing every boundary. It was her way of declaring herself, of drawing a line. She knew where she stood. Outside. (143)

However, Thena's own difference from the patriarchal norm has solidified into a counter-norm -- feminism -- inverting the values and vilifying difference from another 'place'. Constantly challenging patriarchy in its *ideological* manifestation, she has unwittingly reinscribed the *structures* of phallogocentric subjectivity. Arachne, on the other hand, continually crosses boundaries, not into another 'place' or ideology, but into a no-place, outside.

Arachne is an out-law. Like her name-sake, arachnid -- the spider --, she is a rogue (see 83). Images of penal constraint and escape pervade Arachne's view of her life. School "was prison, hemmed in by a teacher's voice more insistent than Lanie's," and where she "was not even allowed to look out of the windows" (165). But like a real prison, school enables her to learn from fellow-inmates more than from the institution of constraint and correction. She learned to lie, and with the help of Mitch, "a derisive but useful companion," she became street-wise. Despite school, "If there was any knowledge to be gained, Arachne got it from him" (166).

Domesticity is similarly a prison. Arachne is capable of, but hates housework. "Thomas usually takes care of that angle of life, but when he's not around, Arachne can experiment, refresh her sense of the horror of what she calls house arrest" (38). Eventually, however, the image gives way to reality. As an adolescent she has had a probation officer, then following her 'liberation' of Josef she is arrested on charges of "kidnapping, transportation out of the province and intent to extort" (234). But she is not contained for long, as "Thomas bails her out and she vanishes" (241).

Arachne's life is driven by the imperative of movement, the dread of the finality of arrival. Her paper-round, bus-driving job and then sales travelling enable her to keep moving. As a traveller, places are important to her, and their names appear in the text as litanies: "Arachne pushes herself through Acme, Carbon, Twining, Linden, Swalwell, Sunnyslope, and Allingham, all in one day" (106). She travels through "Rumsey, Rowley, Craigmyle, Delia, Michichi, Munson, Morrin Bridge, Ghost Pine Creek, towns like their names, isolated, hopeful, doomed" (112). But they must be travelled through. Her need to stop, to spend time in any place, even home, is invariably followed by the need and the relief to be on the road again, to give herself up to the "multifarious seduction of movement" (163-4). Just as marriage spelt death to the life of the body, so arrival is a kind of death. Travelling on the ferry crossing the Strait of Georgia, after the fugu-eating episode, she fantasises an escape over the side into the sea, and the announcement over the intercom:

'COULD THE OWNER OF VEHICLE LICENSE NUMBER DOA 000 PLEASE PROCEED TO THE CAR DECK IMMEDIATELY. REPEAT, PLEASE PROCEED TO THE CAR DECK IMMEDIATELY.' (286)

So far the discussion of Arachne's constitutive dialectic of place and placelessness has suggested that as a subject, Arachne is not *there*. However, the emphasis can be changed to show that the text also enacts her placelessness in the sense that *Arachne* is not there. It was noted at the outset that the text is founded upon, and structured in terms of, her absence. Indeed, she is 'placed' in the text as the object of re-search, the narrator having embarked upon a "search" (9) for "*Arachne's past, 'the present . . . maybe even the future,'*" driven by questions such as "*With a past like that, what chance does she have?*" (183). The text therefore constitutes an attempt to contain Arachne within a teleology (the effect of

the past on the future), and within linear, closed time (the achievement of a (re)solution): "*For here you are, taking stock of her life, and if eternity is comprised of all moments gathered into one, where can you put Arachne now, at what point in that momentum will she stop?*" (183). The researcher's reflections on the search (in social science terms, the 'problem' and the methodology), and the results of the research are textually separated, the separation of subject and object required by conventional social science epistemology, the former appearing in italics and entitled "*Notebook on a missing person.*"

Arachne's subjectivity continually evades the certainty of identity. She opens the question of origins that phallocentrism disavows. Upon meeting her mother at the airport, she wonders "What would we think if we were not supposed to be mother and daughter?" (40), and the intrusion of an element of doubt, a fictional conspiracy, in the 'supposed to be' is solidified in her conviction that she "'was either adopted or stolen'" (114). She explains this common childhood fantasy of escape from parental determination to Thomas:

'When I was little and growing up the way I did, I figured out that I was adopted. It was the only possible answer. I knew I *couldn't* belong where I was, Lanie and Toto weren't really my parents, I was a baby who ended up there by accident, and someday somebody was going to find out about the mistake and fix it.' (135)

She is despondent to have been re-placed within the determination of her parents by the recognition of her difference from Thomas's family. Their gaze fixes her in place, thwarting her psychical disidentification: "'I believed it right up until tonight. And then, when your sister came in and at supper, I knew I hadn't been adopted at all. I belong where I am. It's no accident. There's no mistake. I'm nobody except an East End kid who can't do anything right, I'm Lanie and Toto's kid. Isn't that funny?'" (135).

However, the serious crime against patriarchal disavowal of the anxiety of origins is her questioning of her paternity, and the legitimacy of her inheritance of the Name of the Father which amounts to the fit of name and identity. During an argument, she asks Toto of Gabriel, "'Don't you know why he hung around? He used to come before I was born! Are you sure he's not my father?'" (158). In questioning the Name of the Father, she has questioned her 'place', and in retaliation is literally rendered placeless, Toto throwing her out on the street.

It has been shown in earlier discussion that a prerequisite of subjectivity is the unification, during the mirror stage, of the body into a whole and unique structure, differentiated from the other. Arachne's encounter with her doppelganger compromises both the uniqueness of the self and the identity with the mirror image. Having disguised herself after skipping bail by having her hair dyed blond, Arachne finds herself stopping the Mercedes to pick up a passenger on the side of the highway. The fact that she cannot account for her reasons for stopping for this particular passenger suggests the decentring of a consciousness able to account for its motivations and actions. The hitchhiker is a woman described as "short" and "chunky" (272), accompanied by a bear.<sup>300</sup> The woman turns out also to be a sales representative, dealing in another 'concealed product' -- snoose -- and in her spiel, Arachne "recognizes some of her own passion" (273). A further association is suggested when the woman with the bear, hitchhiking to save on her travel allowance, points out to Arachne of her Mercedes that "This beast must cost you something" (274), the term 'beast' serving also to entangle the two women in the reader's mind. Sharing not only a hotel room but a double bed, in which "she and the woman [are] entangled arms and hair and toes within the thrashed sheets" (276), Arachne watches the woman and finds that "She resembles someone, yet Arachne cannot lay a hand on that furtive recollection" (276). Having evoked something like a distant, barely conscious memory, in an event which recalls the formative function of the mirror stage, "there, in the steamy mirror, she sees that the face on the other body is hers, if she hadn't dyed her hair this awful brassy blond, she would look exactly like the woman. No the woman would look exactly like her" (277). This moment captures a fundamental subversion of the movement of the mirror stage. Through the identification of the two women, perceiver and perceived merge into inter-changeability, thwarting the necessary perception of difference and distance between self and image. However, at the same time, the identity of the self produced by the mirror reflection is also undermined by Arachne's dyed hair. The reflection demonstrates that Arachne is not identical with herself. She escapes unified identity. But the encounter constitutes a brush with identity which is just too close, and after they leave the hotel, "Arachne flees" (277).

Finally, Arachne cheats the closure of death, submitting to no finality of place. Instead she must meet death, and undergo many small deaths in order to resist them and emerge each time doubtfully alive. In the fugu-

eating episode in a sushi bar in the city where she was born, she encounters a 'death' caused by eating the poisonous fish. Having eaten it, "her arms and legs feel distant, lethargic . . . . Her fingers move around the cup but cannot lift it to her lips" (283). As well as the usual paralysis, she enters a nirvana-like state of heightened, "exquisite" awareness. Then she "feels her breathing catch" (284). Importantly, the chef has cut the fugu into "a spider sitting in the middle of its web. Each narrow piece of fish etches a filament, while the spider's eight legs are made of tiny, splayed-out slivers of dark skin" (283). If 'self' as place, or arrival, corresponds to death, then Arachne -- the spider -- consumes that death(-ly identity), just as Gabriel has told Lanie that "Spiders are rogues. They eat each other when there's nothing else to catch" (83).

Arachne 'loses' three months, next finding herself on the ferry, where she initially doubts that she is alive. But the presence of a man on the deck confirms her as 'alive': "She can feel him. That is a surprise. She's supposed to be dead, only visible to herself, and she can feel him quite plainly" (286). However, she must free herself from this other, and this requires his death. She "jabs the hatpin into his chest, deep into his heart . . . . She disentangles herself and straightens her clothes, steps over his body" (287). Although she is 'alive', images of death intensify in her consciousness. She "finds herself dead tired," but she is unsure about sleeping, wondering "will she wake up or will she be truly dead?" As she drives, "pine needles deaden motion" (288). The next day, she reaches a town by the sea, edged with "dead seaweed" (293). The endless motion of Arachne's life loses its meaning without the stillness against which it asserts itself. She finds that "She is desirous of peace; the last three months of oblivion have left her longing to return, not to be out here in the world again, driving, endlessly impelled by motion" (294).

Further mysterious encounters with death include the ghost-story-like account of meeting the airforce man who emerges from the sea, having swum despite its being forbidden since two of his 'buddies' drowned there in July (296-7). His use of the word "automobile" seems old-fashioned, and he is described as having a "chilly hand," and appearing as a "white shape in the whiter moonlight" (298). Later, Arachne reads in a pamphlet in her room that "'In 1944 . . . several men drowned while swimming at night. Subsequently, air force men were forbidden to swim at Long Beach'" (299). Later, in her encounter with Bear Glacier, she is not prepared for it

"spearing the darkness" (307). In the face of "that terrifying blue," Arachne "sinks to her knees. It is the last thing she sees, blue" (307). This incident is related through imagery of ice and blue to the episode in the sushi bar, where the fugu spider "hangs, trembling in its new-spun web, above the celestial blue" of the plate (283), while slivers of fish "shimmer in the pink light, fine as hoarfrost on a branch" (283). Although the account of Arachne's life ends with the statement that "She watches the roadless world below her, knowing she has arrived" (310), Arachne's 'arrival' does not end, nor can she finally be held within, the text.

The researcher began the previous notebook section describing the uncertainty over the question of Arachne's 'death'. Thena confuses matters by telling the researcher, who is asking what became of Arachne after the kidnapping, to "*Let the dead bury the dead*" (237). However, some time later, Thena describes her expectation that Arachne will reappear. The researcher notes:

*You look at her with shock. You thought she was dead.  
'Dead?' Thena screeches. 'Where'd you get that idea? She's as alive as I am'.  
You read in the paper she was dead.  
'The paper'. Thena sniffs. 'Pack of lies.' (239)*

The final extract from the '*Notebook on a missing person*' instantiates lack of closure on a number of levels. The researcher's attempts to track down at least some information about Arachne from townsfolk is continually diverted into their memories of a "*comet, its glowing blue tail spread wide across the sky, so wide and so low its hissing that some thought it was the northern lights come late or early, some thought it was a cloud, or the end of the world*" (315). However, the imagery of blue, and the insistence of this apocalyptic event in their minds suggests that it is not as distant from the subject of Arachne Manteia as the researcher believes. In trying to steer them back to the topic of Arachne, "*They speak of death and deliverance*" (316), which may refer precisely to Arachne. Another closure that is thwarted is that defining and differentiating subject and object. Arachne cannot be contained in place by the research, nor indeed by the researcher, whose own boundaries disappear, merging the one into the other. It is now the researcher who drives relentlessly north, who has "*fallen off the edge*" (317): "*Although you know you must turn back, you continue, no longer on a quest for an ill-defined traveler but for the*

*infinite anguish of uncivilized territory. You've lit out and now you can't stop*" (317). Following a trail of Ladies' Comfort panties down the road where no-one ever comes back, the researcher-narrator and Arachne have both fallen off the edge of the text, denying it definition and closure: *"There is no end to the panties; there will be no end to this road"* (319).

Arachne is the site of mediation between the place of self and, rather than a counter-place or consistent ideology of resistance, a continual crossing of boundaries into disruptive placelessness. She instantiates the problem of identity through her constitutive absence, the absence which founds the text through which she travels in permanent evasion of the mastery of narrative.

All three novels address questions of identity and subjectivity in relation to forms of mirror encounter and passage through the mirror-stage. Similarly, while the ambivalences and instabilities of subjectivity characterise both masculine and feminine subjects, these novels focus on the particular difficulties of passage into subjectivity for those positioned by phallocentrism as 'feminine' -- women, and the racial/cultural/class 'others' of the privileged masculine, white, middle-class subject of the dominant National Symbolic. *Lilian's Story* and *My Place* describe the fragmenting of Imaginary wholeness by the intrusive intervention of the Law of the Father, and both illustrate the consequent positioning of characters as Self-constituting others in relation to patriarchy and to white Australia. In Lilian's case, it is literally her father who shatters the plenitude of her encounter with her self-as-image, her body-unity, in order to impose the form of his Law. In the case of Sally, her contact with school teachers and friends constitutes the intrusion of the Other of dominant white Australian society into the (unarticulated) 'security' of her identity. However, Daisy and Gladys have already undergone the fragmentation of family-identity in relation to the miscegenations and splitting of families which were common strategies of colonial-National power. The absence of the Name of the Father is compensated by the presence of the state in the paternal function. Unlike the masculine subject who accedes to the Father's place (in language), subjectivity is denied to feminine 'others' such as Lilian and Sally; they remain 'silenced' in themselves, fixed in their place behind the phallocentric mirror. Contestatory subjectivity is thus necessarily a matter of 'borrowing' the Father's (place in) language, while strategically 'escaping' its determinations and fixities. In other



words, it involves a continual passage back and forth through the mirror, straining the stability of its very structure.

Escape is also Arachne's principal mode in *No Fixed Address*. Temporary pleasure in mirror-image encounters and identifications, such as those with Josef who represents for Arachne a projection of her future self, and the woman hitchhiker with the bear, in whom she sees an image of her present self, gives way to the refusal of mirror-images as constraining. She refuses the stability of the image, the fixity of that place or (discursive) position, even of difference. Uncertainty over Arachne's paternity, and the socially 'marginal' status of both contenders, casts Thomas more securely into the paternal function. Arachne's earlier securities, even within her 'otherness', are alienated by Thomas's obvious proprietorship of, and propriety in, the Symbolic. Thus, while he offers her a 'place' (in the Symbolic), in doing so, he reinforces its status as an inauthentic, borrowed place. And while Arachne is drawn to Thomas, and *needs* him, she is also constitutively required continually to leave him. Like Lilian, and the characters in *My Place*, she must continually traverse back and forth through the mirror: places are important, but only in relation to travelling to them and leaving them.

This Chapter has traced processes of subject-constitution and the decentring of consciousness both in relation to the 'individual' subject of desires and resistances, and to the form(ation) of social structures such as Nation and culture. The three novels discussed at the end similarly demonstrate narrative parallels between the trials of subject-constitution in relation to phallocentrism within the familial and the more broadly socio-political structures in which they are inserted. In the next Chapter I shall begin to explore these ambivalences and insecurities of subjectivity in relation to the 'feminine' status of post-colonial discourses, as they traverse positions in the Imaginary and the Symbolic, constantly moving 'outsiders' in relation to the security of dominant discourses isomorphic with the National-Symbolic.

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Notes.

<sup>1</sup> While most commentators would agree that the earliest literary production of a colony could be termed 'colonial literature, this description is not always seen as unified or monolithic in form or content. For example, in his "Versions of the Dream: Literature and the Search for Identity," in David Novitz and Bill Willmott (eds), *Culture and Identity in New Zealand* (Wellington: GP Books, 1989), Lawrence Jones argues that New Zealand literature moved (though the implication is also that it developed) from 'Early colonial' to 'Late colonial' phases. Abdul JanMohamed utilised the developmental paradigm in discussion of African fiction of the 'dominant' and 'hegemonic' phases of colonialism (see "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature," *Critical Inquiry*, 12 [1985], pp. 59-87). In these and other cases, the differences are related to changes in the political and cultural factors implied in the terms.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Simon During, "Postmodernism or Postcolonialism?" *Landfall* 39, No. 3 (1985), p. 369; Simon During, "Postmodernism or postcolonialism today," *Textual Practice*, 1, No. 1 (1987), p. 43; Mark Williams, "Looking Sideways: English Studies, Tradition and Cross-cultural Comparisons," *SPAN* 28 (1989), p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> The linear model has been rejected similarly by Diana Brydon, who argues in "Australian Literature and the Canadian Comparison," *Meanjin*, 38, No. 2 (1979), that "It may be more useful to underplay theories which identify artificial stages of development, looking instead at the recurrent tensions underlying colonial experience and the changes in their relationships over time," (p. 156); and by David Walker, who points out that "The changing character of national aspirations over time, the often intricate elements in nationalist thinking and the many variations upon national emotions in any one period all detract from attempts to explain the emergence of a 'national culture' in terms of a steady ascent from colonial backwardness to national maturity," in his *Dream and Disillusion: A Search for Australian Cultural Identity* [Canberra: Australian National Univ. Press, 1976], p. 211).

<sup>4</sup> While there are many important feature of convergence between the sense of post-colonial as it is situated here, and the term 'post-national' which has been applied to post-modernism, retaining the term post-colonial addresses the specific nationalisms which were/are legacies of colonialism itself. For a discussion of post-modernism as post-nationalism, see Leonard Wilcox, "Postmodernism or Anti-modernism?" *Landfall*, 39, No. 3 (1985), pp. 344-364.

<sup>5</sup> Suzanne Zeller, *Inventing Canada: Early Victorian Science and the Idea of a Transcontinental Nation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Zeller, p. 111; citing Geoffrey Best, *Honour Among Men and Nations* (The 1981 Joanne Goodman Lectures; Toronto 1982), p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> Tim Rowse, *Australian Liberalism and National Character* (Melbourne: Kibble Books, 1978), pp. 63, 64.

<sup>8</sup> Rowse defines 'liberalism' as a system of conceiving society as "an ensemble of atomistic individuals, and the state's actions are taken to be a pursuit of the 'collective interest' of that social ensemble. The two important concepts . . . are 'the individual' and the various conceptual equivalents of the social totality: 'state', 'collective interest', 'common purpose'. Any individual's membership of any social group or class is regarded as secondary to its membership of the total society" (p. 15).

<sup>9</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 131.

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- 10 Anderson, p. 131.
  - 11 Anika Rifflet-Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan* (trans.) David Macey, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 178.
  - 12 Fredric Jameson, "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, Psychoanalytic Criticism, and the Problem of the Subject", p. 353.
  - 13 Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, (trans.) Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 1977; rpt. 1989), p. 4.
  - 14 Anthony Wilden, *The Language of the Self* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 161.
  - 15 JanMohamed, p. 305.
  - 16 Anderson, p. 133.
  - 17 If it were, the fundamental falsification effected by considering, for example, only English Canada, as if it and French Canada were historically and in other ways totally discrete, would be indefensible. There will be other 'simplifications' which will falsify the account if it is read in that way.
  - 18 By 1900, the Maori population of New Zealand was the lowest ever recorded, and many European New Zealanders (Pakeha) foresaw the extinction of the Maori. Most New Zealanders saw themselves as British, and the lack of contradiction perceived in this identity reflected the pre-eminence of the race. See Malcolm McKinnon, "Nationalism in New Zealand," *Meanjin*, 44, No. 3 (1985), p. 366.
  - 19 "'New Zealanders' became a term that applied to Pakehas rather than Maoris" (McKinnon, 365).
  - 20 Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (trans.) Gillian C. Gill (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 81.
  - 21 Cited in Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand* (Rev. ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p. 281.
  - 22 Norman Macdonald, *Canada: Immigration and Colonisation: 1841-1903* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1966), p. 3.
  - 23 Sinclair, p. 61.
  - 24 Cited in Richard White, *Inventing Australia* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 34.
  - 25 Sinclair, p. 97.
  - 26 Sinclair, p. 213. Richard White has pointed to the allegorical representation of Australia as 'Minerva' and claimed that "'Minerva' too was a dutiful daughter" (121).
  - 27 George R. Parkin, "The Reorganisation of the British Empire," *The Century*, 37 (Dec. 1888), pp. 190-1; cited in Paul Bennett and Cornelius Jaenan, *Emerging Identities: Selected Problems and Interpretations in Canadian History* (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall, 1986), p. 303.

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- 28 Arthur Lower, *Colony to Nation: A History of Canada* (1946; Longmans, 1964), p. 314.
- 29 Lower, p. 264.
- 30 Eleanor Dark, *No Barrier* (Sydney: Collins, 1953), pp. 28-9.
- 31 McKinnon, p. 365-67. The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the dependence on the British market of New Zealand exports of meat, butter, and cheese following the 1890s depression and the collapse of the primary export market based on timber, wool and gold. However the Depression of the 1930s played a role in changing this in uncovering a lack of mutuality in the economic relationship between Britain and New Zealand. Eventually the need for New Zealand economic independence from Britain was effected by Britain's entry into the European Economic Community in 1973.
- 32 Northrop Frye, "National Consciousness in Canadian Culture," in his *Divisions on a Ground: Essays on Canadian Culture* (ed.) James Polk (Toronto: Anansi, 1982), p. 44
- 33 W. L. Morton, *The Canadian Identity* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 35.
- 34 J.D.B. Miller, "'an Empire that don't care what you do ...'", in A.F. Madden and W.H. Morris-Jones, (eds) *Australia and Britain: Studies in a Changing Relationship* (London: Frank Cass & Co., and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Univ. Of London, 1980), p. 99.
- 35 Richard Rosencrance, "The Radical Culture of Australia," in Louis Hartz, *The Founding of New Societies: Studies in the History of the United States, Latin America, South Africa, Canada and Australia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc, 1964), p. 295.
- 36 White, p. 50.
- 37 Donald R. Beer, "Responsible Government in the 1980s: A Survey of Recent Literature of the Introduction of Colonial Self-Government in British North America," *Australian-Canadian Studies*, 8, No. 1 (1990), p. 80.
- 38 Lower, 182.
- 39 Frederick Philip Grove, "Nationhood" in his *It Needs to Be Said* (Ottawa: The Tecumseh Press, 1982), p. 146.
- 40 Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, p. 31.
- 41 Norman Macdonald, *Canada: 1763-1841: Immigration and Settlement: the Administration of the Imperial Land Regulations* (1939; rpt. London, New York and Toronto: Longmans Green and Co, 1959), p. 464.
- 42 Lower, p. 193.
- 43 Grove, p. 147.
- 44 Norman Harper, "A Historical Perspective," in Norman Harper (ed.) *Pacific Orbit: Australian-American Relations since 1942* (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire; Anglo-American Association, 1962), pp. 180-181.

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- 45 White, p. 50.
- 46 Sinclair, p. 59.
- 47 Sinclair, p. 98.
- 48 White, p. 56.
- 49 Sinclair, p. 98.
- 50 Cited in Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male -- A History* (Auckland: Penguin, 1987), p. 24.
- 51 See White, p. 47.
- 52 White, p. 27.
- 53 Sinclair, p. 231.
- 54 J.D.B. Miller, in Madden & Morris-Jones (eds), p. 98.
- 55 White, p. 73. Paul Spoonley, in his *The Politics of Nostalgia: Racism and the Extreme Right in New Zealand* (Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press, 1987), observes a similar conflation of Empire and race informing the beliefs of right wing political groupings in New Zealand from the 1890s to the 1930s: "The dominance of political colonial links saw explicit ideologies concerning ruler and ruled . . . in the New Zealand context. Typically they encompassed notions about the suitability of the British to rule over others, the inherent superiority of British customs and institutions and the necessity of preserving these advantages by maintaining 'racial purity'. These beliefs were part of the desire of New Zealand governments to create their own version of a colonial empire in the Pacific from the 1890s," (p. 51). H. Blair Neatby has described a form of Canadian imperialism grounded in a consciousness of belonging to Empire and of being indebted to England: "This was the imperialism based on a respect for the principles, and especially the political principles, which Great Britain seemed to represent. To such imperialists, pride in the Empire was based on the belief that the British Empire was the bulwark of liberty and justice in the world. This might be described as intellectual imperialism rather than racial or emotional imperialism. Being a reasoned rather than emotional attachment to England, it was the most moderate form of imperialism, but it was nonetheless significant" (See H. Blair Neatby, "'Laurier and Imperialism' in Carl Berger (ed) *Imperial Relations in the Age of Laurier*, Canadian Historical Readings Series (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 1-2, 5.
- 56 Sinclair, pp 216-218.
- 57 Sinclair, p. 214.
- 58 A. Grenfell Price, *Australia Comes of Age: A Study of Growth to Nationhood and of External Relations* (Melbourne, 1945), pp. 139-40; cited in White, p. 152.
- 59 Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1970), pp. 9-10.
- 60 J.D.B. Miller, in Madden and Morris-Jones (eds), pp 96-7.
- 61 Morton, p. 58.

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- 62 Morton, p. 86.
- 63 Morton, p. 47.
- 64 Morton, p. 47.
- 65 Zelman Cowen, "Two Federations," in Harper (ed.), p.187.
- 66 Morton, p. 39.
- 67 Morton, p. 58-9.
- 68 Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989), p. 115.
- 69 White, p. 52.
- 70 McKinnon, p. 365.
- 71 Frye, "Sharing the Continent," in *Divisions*, p. 66.
- 72 Sinclair, p. 226.
- 73 Sinclair, p. 222. Sinclair has also differentiated Australia, Canada and New Zealand against each other in arguing that "In the nineteen-twenties . . . the Canadians -- and South Africans -- were to feel the need to remove all anachronistic vestiges of Britain's old power; the New Zealanders -- and Australians -- were by then satisfied with their position" (p. 222).
- 74 Grosz, pp. 126-7.
- 75 Phillips, p. 141; my emphasis.
- 76 Sinclair, p. 232. Jock Phillips similarly cites Leo Fanning's 1916 claim that "'the story of New Zealand's camps is the story of New Zealand's rapid growth to sturdy manhood as a member of the British Imperial Family" (p. 163). With regard to the claim that Gallipoli saw the attainment of New Zealand nationhood Phillips argues that it was an extraordinary claim, "since the landing was conducted at the behest of the Imperial Mother and as part of an Anzac force which was predominantly Australian" (p. 164).
- 77 Phillips, p. 152.
- 78 White, p. 73.
- 79 Jock Phillips, "War and National Identity," in Novtiz and Willmott (eds), p. 100. This statement expresses a form of sibling rivalry, competition for the mother's body.
- 80 White, p. 72.
- 81 Phillips, *A Man's Country?* p. 112.
- 82 Anderson, p. 16.

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83 Lacan locates the possible beginning of the mirror stage at the age of six months, when "Unable as yet to walk, or even to stand up, and held tightly as he is by some support, human or artificial . . . he nevertheless overcomes . . . the obstructions of his support and, fixing his attitude in a slightly leaning-forward position, in order to hold it in his gaze, brings back an instantaneous aspect of the image" (*Ecrits: A Selection*, pp. 1-2).

84 Grosz, p. 48.

85 Grosz, p. 115.

86 Anderson, p. 26.

87 Grosz, p. 118.

88 Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (trans.) Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 111.

89 Anderson, p. 26.

90 McKinnon, p. 364.

91 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p. 1. Both definitions are at this point necessarily brief and simple, but more detailed analysis is required before discussion of some of the more complex understandings of nationalism.

92 This term is used as a derivation from the philosophical 'materialist' position described by Tim Rowse as one which "relates human behaviour to the objective circumstances of people's lives," in Rowse, p. 43. It is opposed to the 'idealist' position which "understands will, human ideas etc, as being more important causally than the material circumstances of people's lives" (p. 42).

93 Gellner, p. 55.

94 McKinnon differentiates between the nationalism which associated with the revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century, "brought into the public domain a set of notions about the rights of people to organise their own political, social and economic lives" from "the older face of nationalism, seeking not so much liberation from external oppression as power to impose uniformity and homogeneity within" (p. 364). In "National Identity," *Quadrant* 25, (Aug, 1981), H.W. Arndt refers to nationalism both as "exclusiveness, xenophobia, hostility to enemies without" which "has its uses for political elites who, for good or ill, seek to mobilise national energies in their cause" (p. 27), and to "leaders of national liberation movements" whose sense of national identity "refuses any longer to tolerate foreign rulers" (p. 28).

95 Germaine Warkentin, cited in Margaret Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 1972), p. 9.

96 Northrop Frye, "Conclusion," in Carl F. Klinck (ed.) *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 835.

97 David Novitz, "On Culture and Cultural Identity," in Novitz and Willmott (eds), p. 279.

98 Novitz, p. 279; my emphases.

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99 Frye, "Conclusion," p. 826.

100 Ian Wedde, "Checking Out the Foundations: Editing the *Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*," *Meanjin* 44, No. 3 (1985), p. 342.

101 See Morton, p. 71; also p. 83: "Canadian destiny is an evolution in progress"

102 A.B. McKillop, *The Contours of Canadian Thought* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 5.

103 Novitz, pp. 277, 278; my emphases.

104 White, p. viii.

105 White, p. ix.

106 Arndt, p. 28; my emphasis.

107 Zeller, p. 240.

108 Zeller, p. 240. Zeller cites PAC, Sandford Fleming Papers, 93, Folder 3, 'The Canadian Flag,' (1895); 15, Folder 109, J. Fletcher to Fleming, 18 June 1895. Janet Carnochan, 'The Origin of the Maple Leaf as the Emblem of Canada,' *OHS, Papers and Records* 7 (1906): 141-3.

109 In his Introduction to the selection of Baudrillard's writings, Mark Poster explains that "In a commodity the relation of word, image or meaning, and referent is broken and restructured so that its force is directed, not to the referent of use value or utility, but to desire" (Mark Poster (ed.), *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* (Stanford University Press/Polity Press, with Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 1).

110 White, p. 103. See also Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 211.

111 Phillips, pp. 266, 268.

112 White, p. 77.

113 Alexander Harris, *Settlers and Convicts* (1847); cited in Dennis Altman, "The Myth of Mateship," *Meanjin*, 46, No. 2 (1987), p. 165.

114 Altman, p. 166. Canada's history bears closer resemblance to the general North American situation, as Beryl Donaldson Langer points out in the contrast between "Canada where individual families on small land-holdings were able to achieve economic independence, [while] Australian conditions favoured the large-scale pastoralist with capital", and thus the "economic centrality of the pastoral industry gave . . . the 'nomad tribesman' -- an itinerant rural proletariat, overwhelmingly masculine in composition and outlook -- a central place in the nation's image of itself" (See Beryl Donaldson Langer, "Women and Literary Production," in Russel McDougall and Gillian Whitlock (eds), *Australian-Canadian Literatures in English: Comparative Perspectives* (North Ryde: Methuen, 1987), pp. 144, 145).

115 Altman, p. 166.



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116 Zeller, p. 241; cit. CAg 13/11 (1 June 1861): 350; see also [David Boyle], 'The Origin of Our Maple Leaf Emblem,' OHS, *Papers and Records* 5 (1904): 22-6.

117 Walker, p. 99. Walker is referring to an article by Frederick Sinclair, entitled "The Two Australias". In a similar vein, it has been argued by Chester Martin that "it is possible that the remedy for the glaring contrasts in size and resources among the Canadian provinces is to be found in the spirit rather than in the statistics of Canadian nationhood", in his *The Foundations of Canadian Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1955), p. 403.

118 Phillips, *A Man's Country?* p. 266.

119 Langer, p. 145.

120 Zeller, p. 176, [my emphases]; citing. Morris, *Nova Britannia* (Montreal, 1858), 49

121 Bruce Nesbitt, "Canada and New Zealand: The Literary Origins of Identity," in Reginald Berry and James Acheson (eds), *Regionalism and National Identity: Multi-Disciplinary Essays on Canada, Australia and New Zealand* (Christchurch: Assoc. for Canadian Studies in Australia and New Zealand, 1985), p. 83.

122 Janet Morchain and Mason Wade, *Search for a Nation: French-English Relations in Canada Since 1759* (Canada: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1967), p. 5.

123 Morchain and Wade, p.6.

124 Phillips, p. 165.

125 Ward, p. 106. My emphasis.

126 Altman, pp. 165, 166, 170, 171.

127 See Altman, p. 163.

128 White, pp. 82, 83; my emphases.

129 Langer, p. 147.

130 Langer, p. 147.

131 Langer, p. 147. The implications of this extremely important point about Canada will be expanded upon in section 1. III. (ii) of this chapter, "Neo-Imperialism as Threat to Sovereignty." In a footnote, she points out that Australian 'opposition' to Britain was contradictory, and in general not a political, but a cultural opposition in the sense of its function in determining 'national character'.

132 Phillips, p. vii.

133 Phillips, p. 111; my emphases.

134 A.D. Hope, cited in Vincent Buckley, "Towards an Australian Literature," *Meanjin*, 18, No. 1 (1959), p. 65.

135 Rowse, p. 21.

136 Atwood, *Survival*, pp 15-16. While in empiricist terms Atwood's formulation could be regarded as 'sexist', there is a certain felicity in her evocation of the male in front of the mirror. Grosz argues that for Irigaray, "the mirror reflects only an image placed in front of it: the (implicitly) masculine being. The specular relation is thus composed of man and his self-reflecting other. . . . This speculative mirror in which his world, his experiences, his position(s) are projected onto the other must be traversed. . . .for women to become the subjects looking." (p. 130)

137 Anderson links the "vernacularizing thrust" of capitalism, and the dissemination of printed matter to large new reading publics, enabling political mobilisation, which dates back to the printing in German translation of Martin Luther's theses; he refers to the "half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), [and] a technology of communications (print)." It was print which enabled diverse and even mutually incomprehensible dialects to be represented as unified languages able to be understood by reading, and thus creating a sense of community among those whose speech dialects had previously isolated them. Print-capitalism established a fixity to language which enabled the image of antiquity central to the subjective idea of nation. And print-capitalism gave rise to languages-of-power, privileged dialects ostensibly closer to the written form, marginalising others, including what Anderson refers to as 'sub-nationalities', whose twentieth-century struggles to emerge into print themselves, to attain sovereign or national recognition through emergence into literature in the post-colonial context constitute the project addressed by this thesis. See Anderson, pp. 47, 48.

138 Gellner explains that, with the rise of nationalism, "For the first time in human history, explicit and reasonably precise communication becomes generally, pervasively used and important. In the closed local communities of the agrarian or tribal worlds, when it came to communication, context, tone, gesture, personality and situation were everything. Communication, such as it was, took place without the benefit of precise formulation" ( p. 33). The function of culture under the new order is no longer merely that of "the adornment, confirmation and legitimation of a social order which was also sustained by harsher and coercive constraints; culture is now the necessary sacred medium, the life-blood or perhaps rather the minimal shared atmosphere, within which alone the members of the society can breathe and survive and produce. . . . Moreover, it must now be a great or high (literate, training-sustained) culture" (pp. 37-8).

139 Timothy Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: MacMillan Press, 1989), p. 8.

140 David Lloyd "Writing in the Shit: Beckett, Nationalism and the Colonial Subject," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 35, No. 1 (1989), p. 74; citing the view of Daniel Corkery in *Synge and Anglo-Irish Literature* (Cork: Cork UP, 1931).

141 Buckley, p. 60.

142 Buckley, p. 63.

143 Buckley, p. 63.

144 Buckley, p. 61.

145 Buckley, p. 62.

146 Frye, "Conclusion," p. 827.

147 Frye, "Across the River and Out of the Trees," in *Divisions*, p. 30; my emphasis.

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- 148 Leonie Kramer, "Introduction" to Kramer (ed.), *The Oxford History of Australian Literature* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 12.
- 149 Walker, p. 194; my emphasis.
- 150 Buckley, p. 64; my emphasis.
- 151 Atwood, *Survival*, p. 13.
- 152 Atwood, p. 13. In her "Eleven Years of Alphabet," *Canadian Literature*, No. 49 (1971), Atwood describes the Canadian habit of mind, contrasting it with the English and the American: "Give the same poem to a model American, a model Englishman and a model Canadian critic: the American will say 'This is how it works'; the Englishman 'How good, how true to life (or How boring, tasteless and trite)'; the Canadian will say 'This is where it fits into the entire universe'" (pp. 62-3).
- 153 David Lloyd, pp. 73-4.
- 154 Atwood, *Survival*, p. 12.
- 155 Coral Ann Howells, *Private and Fictional Words: Canadian Women Novelists of the 1970s and 1980s* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987), p. 21.
- 156 Brydon, p. 160; my emphasis.
- 157 cited in Walker, p. 202.
- 158 Walker, p. 1.
- 159 Adrian Mitchell, "Fiction" in Kramer (ed.), p. 68.
- 160 Kramer, p. 12.
- 161 Walker, p. 1; my emphasis. These four men were Vance Palmer (1885-1959), Louis Esson (1875-1943), Frank Wilmot (1881-1942), and Frederick Sinclair (1881-1954).
- 162 Chris Prentice and Elizabeth Thomas, "Institutionalising New Zealand Literature," *Antithesis*, 1, No. 1 (1987), p. 43.
- 163 Prentice and Thomas, p. 45; citing. Ruth Harley, "Politics and Public Themes in New Zealand Literature 1930-1950: With Special Attention to Mulgan, Sargeson, Mason, Fairburn, Curnow," PhD Thesis U. of Auckland, 1980, 109-29; and Bill Pearson, "Fretful Sleepers: A Sketch of New Zealand Behaviour and its Implications for the Artist," ed. Charles Brasch *Landfall Country: Work from Landfall 1947-61* (Christchurch: The Caxton Press, 1962), 330-72.
- 164 Rowse, p. 231.
- 165 Rowse, p. 231.
- 166 Walker, p. 99.
- 167 Tim Rowse, p. 3.

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168 Prentice and Thomas, pp 43, 44. Thomas further points out the possibility that the 'maleness' of this name (Hyde's real name was Iris Wilkinson), was an attempt to disguise her gender.

169 Prentice and Thomas, p. 44.

170 Susan Sheridan, "'Temper Romantic; Bias Offensively Feminine': Australian Women Writers and Literary Nationalism," *Kunapipi*, 7, No. 2/3 (1985), p. 49. Sheridan refers particularly to responses to the so-called 'Lady Novelists' Ada Cambridge, Rosa Praed and 'Tasma'.

171 Sheridan, p. 54. Note that Miles Franklin is another 'male' pseudonym for a female writer of this nationalist period.

172 Sheridan, pp. 49-50.

173 This is perhaps evoked by a "homely parable" cited by Martin in *The Foundations of Canadian Nationhood*, in which "An Australian, a South African, and a couple of Canadians were congratulating a New Zealander upon the harmony which seemed to prevail in that idyllic community." The New Zealander in turn complimented the achievements of Canadian politics: "The truth is, he concluded modestly, we have not enough difference of opinion in New Zealand to engender energetic statesmanship" (pp. 403-4).

174 Howells, p. 25; my emphasis.

175 Howells, p. 3.

176 Barry Cameron, "Lacan: Implications of Psychoanalysis and Canadian Discourse" in ed. John Moss, *Future Indicative: Literary Theory and Canadian Literature* (University of Ottawa Press, 1987), p. 139.

177 Cameron, p. 139.

178 Cameron, p. 142.

179 Cameron, p. 139.

180 Cameron, p. 140

181 Cameron, p. 146.

182 Gellner, p. 57.

183 Gellner, p. 127.

184 Gellner, p. 42.

185 Gellner, p. 42.

186 Lloyd, p. 79.

187 Lloyd, p. 84.

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- 188 Lloyd, p. 79.
- 189 Lloyd, p. 83.
- 190 Lower, p. 411-2.
- 191 Dennis Lee, "Cadence, Country, Silence: Writing in Colonial Space," *boundary 2*, 3, No. 1 (1974), p. 156.
- 192 Rowse, p. 255.
- 193 Max. Harris, *The Angry Eye* (Potts Point: Pergamon Press, 1973), p. 4.
- 194 Rowse, p. 258.
- 195 Rowse, p. 258.
- 196 Lee, p. 156.
- 197 Frye, "Conclusion," p. 826.
- 198 cited in Peter Crabb, "Regionalism and National Identity: Canada and Australia," in Berry and Acheson (eds), p. 20-1.
- 199 Lee, p. 157.
- 200 Cameron, p. 2. He contrasts this with "hysteric interrogation," the implications of which will be elaborated later in this chapter, and throughout the thesis.
- 201 The weakening of Australian, Canadian and New Zealand ties with Britain has been put in an international context which takes account of the relative decline of Britain in power and world trade, and, especially since World War II, the diversification of economic and defence relationships for these ex-colonies. After the Second World War, Canadians turned to the United Nations, rather than the Commonwealth, as the body in which Commonwealth nations would find their "natural orbits." The United States was both a member of, and exercising leadership within, the United Nations (Morton, p. 55). Indeed, the influence of the United States has not been limited either to Canada in scope, or to colonial history in relevance. From the 1950s countries other than Britain were of greater relative economic significance to Australia. The 1960s saw the rapid economic growth of Japan, and the liberalisation of imports from the United States. By the second half of the 1960s, the United States was the largest single source of Australian imports, while Japan was the largest export market (J.O.N. Perkins, p. 181). The Second World War has also been seen as the origin of the closeness of Australian-American political ties. The decline in British power was accompanied by a United States military Containment policy which catered to American "eager[ness] to expand its empire to encompass every area of strategic importance across the Pacific and along the rimlands of Asia" (Camilleri, p. 1). In 1951, the formal alliance between Australia, New Zealand and the United States (ANZUS) was signed in response to the communist launching of war by Korea. It has been argued that since 1951, the Australian-American military partnership has been "directly related to the threat of communism" (Miller, p. 27). It has also been from the 1950s that New Zealand political leadership has accepted that its interests lay as much with the United States as with Britain (McKinnon, p. 368).
- 202 Rowse, p. 139; describing the analysis of C. Hartley Grattan in *Introducing Australia* (1942).

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203 Rowse, p. 139.

204 Grosz, p. 119.

205 Grosz, p. 108.

206 W. Levi, *American-Australian Relations* (Minneapolis, 1947), p. 82; cited in Harper, p. 186.

207 Lee, p. 155. The elisions are nearly all specifications of the effects on Canadian writing, but I believe that the point is both applicable and vital in a much broader cultural context. A similar point is made by Alan Lawson, who argues that "Political imperialism was brought to an end in Australia relatively early and surprisingly easily . . . but cultural imperialism is never easy to resist" (in Madden and Morris, p. 135).

208 Ronald Sutherland, "A Literary Perspective: The Development of a National Consciousness," in *Understanding Canada*, p. 409; my emphasis. Northrop Frye has also dismissed the idea of a filial relationship between Canada and the United States: "Canadians have never thought of the United States as a parental figure, like Britain, and analogies of youthful revolt and the like would be absurd" ("Conclusion," in *Divisions*, p. 75). However, the argument that the two nations can be seen as 'parallel' overlooks much less structurally overt but all the more difficult power imbalances between them.

209 Gerald M. Craig, "A Historical Perspective: The Evolution of a Nation," in *Understanding Canada*, p. 131; my emphasis.

210 Craig, p. 132; my emphasis.

211 Roger Frank Swanson, "An International Perspective: The Foreign Policy of Adjustment," in *Understanding Canada*, p. 555-6; my emphasis. The notion of intimacy is also suggested in Donald Horne's looking forward, for Australia, to a "quite massive relationship with America (White, p. 162).

212 Swanson, p. 556.

213 Baudrillard asks "Is it seducing, or being seduced, that is seductive?" He argues, however, that "being seduced is still the best way of seducing. It is an endless strophe. There is no active or passive in seduction, no subject or object . . . No one can seduce another if they have not been seduced themselves" (Mark Poster (ed) *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* [Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press in assoc. with Basil Blackwell, 1988], p. 160.

214 Cited in Rowse, p. 138.

215 Rowse, p. 139; my emphasis.

216 White, p. 121.

217 White, p. 143; my emphasis.

218 White, p. 165; my emphasis.

219 Willmott, p. 19; my emphasis.

220 Willmott, p. 2.

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- 221 Willmott, p. 19.
- 222 Gellner, p. 48; his emphasis.
- 223 Stephen Shortus, "Now and Then: The Nation-State and Nationalism, 1888-1988," *Meanjin*, 47, No. 2 (1988), p. 196; his emphasis.
- 224 Shortus, p. 196.
- 225 Shortus, p. 196.
- 226 Smith, pp. 77, 79.
- 227 Shortus, p. 195.
- 228 During, "Postmodernism or Postcolonialism?" p. 370.
- 229 Lloyd, p. 82.
- 230 "The symbolic is 'erected' only on the basis of the repression of the maternal. As Freud argued, what is repressed is the feminine," (Grosz, p. 49).
- 231 Cameron has described the unconscious as "the site of another set of signifiers, elements whose entry into the Symbolic order is barred -- barred in the sense of being blocked and in the sense of being signified by virtue of the bar of repression, traces only present in their absence and through their differences" (p. 6).
- 232 Since the use of the term 'unconscious' in relation to nation is metaphorical, it must be read as entirely different from Jung's theory of the 'collective unconscious'.
- 233 Novitz and Willmott (eds), p. ix.
- 234 David Elkins, "Western Alienation in Canada: Regional Variations in National Identity," in Berry and Acheson (eds), p. 465.
- 235 Willmott, p. 12.
- 236 Willmott, p. 12; my emphasis.
- 237 Paul Bennett and Cornelius Jaenan refer to "Unity in Diversity" as "a hopeful phrase which has been widely applied to Canada since the heady days of Expo '67 and the centennial celebrations," although the mid-1980s have been characterised as much by division as by unity. See Paul Bennett and Cornelius Jaenan (eds), *Emerging Identities*, p. 524.
- 238 Elkins, p. 466; my emphasis.
- 239 Willmott, p. 14.
- 240 Chapters Two and Three focus on precisely this textual mediation of belonging (place and ownership) in post-colonialism.
- 241 Smith, p. 81.

242 Smith, p. 81.

243 Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Feminist Discourse and its Discontents: Language, Power and Meaning," in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 7, no. 31 (1982), p. 612.

244 Andrew McCann, "Demarcating the Post-colonial Subject," *Antithesis*, 3 (1989), p. 79.

245 The term 'Maori' means 'normal' or 'ordinary', and has only been used to designate the indigenous people of New Zealand since colonisation. Before colonisation, identities were expressed sub-tribally or tribally. The term Inuit (singular - Inuk) means something like 'the people'. The use of the term 'Aboriginal' or 'Aborigine' for indigenous Australians, while common, has been challenged. James Miller explains his use of the name 'Koori': "The word Aboriginal is a Latin-derived English word. The term Aboriginal did not give my people a separate identity. Furthermore, Aboriginal always has derogatory connotations. . . . The word Koori, however, is a generic term that was used by my ancestors and other peoples of the central coast of New South Wales to identify themselves. . . . I would also like to see this word become a term of national identification for all Kooris living in Australia today" (James Miller, *Koori: A Will To Win* [North Ryde and London: Angus and Robertson, 1985; second ed. 1986], p. vii). Although the claim to name indigenous Australians nationally is founded on respect for the memories of those who "first felt the full impact of white settlement" (ibid.), it is entirely predictable that there have been other, competing claims to the right to name the people from those of different descent. The problem is clearly one inherent to the impulse to confer a post-colonial unity on to pre-colonial differences.

246 Sharon Alston wrote that "Moving gradually away from Gay Liberation towards the feminist perspective was essential to our growing awareness of ourselves as women and our awareness of specifically lesbian issues. The transition also enabled us to put pressure on the Women's Movement. We needed to be seen, to be heard, to invite participation. To be reckoned with" ("Looking Back at the Seventies," *Broadsheet*, No. 77 (March, 1980)). Similarly, Canadian feminist Amy Gottlieb refers to the advent of lesbian visibility out of a gay movement which "has rarely integrated an understanding of the female aspect of our oppression," while "The role of lesbians in the women's movement has changed dramatically since the lesbian/straight debates of the early 1970s" ("Mothers, Sisters, Lovers, Listen," in *Still Ain't Satisfied*, p. 236, 237). There are many examples of the historical and discursive construction of groups. See, for example, David Grylls, *Guardians and Angels: Parents and Children in Nineteenth Century Literature* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), pp. 20-1; p. 32.

247 McCann, p. 79.

248 McCann, p. 79.

249 Evelyn Kallen, "Multiculturalism: Ideology, Policy and Reality," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 17, No. 1 (1982), pp. 60, 61, 62.

250 Donna Awatere, *Maori Sovereignty* (Auckland: Broadsheet, 1984), p. 10.

251 Awatere, p. 32. Anthropologists R.M. and C.H. Berndt have identified similar calls among Australian Aboriginal activists, in the form of "demands that people of Aboriginal descent should be able to decide their own affairs -- and the corollary, insisted on by some of them, that nobody else should be allowed to do so" (*The World of the First Australians: Aboriginal Traditional Life: Past and Present* [Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1988], p. 528).

252 Awatere, p. 13.



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253 Poananga, Part. 2, p. 25.

254 Awatere, p. 83.

255 Awatere, p. 105.

256 Poananga, Part. 2, p. 25. Such unificatory projects are alluded to by the Berndts with regard to Australian Aboriginal "concern for cultural preservation and Aboriginal revival. A wave of feeling for 'Aboriginal' identity, pointing toward *pan-Aboriginality*, seeks to establish a common socio-cultural heritage . . . . [Focusing on] Aboriginal religious features [and] re-inforced through the nation-wide demand for rights to land . . . . [t]he significance of Aboriginal identity is of considerable importance, because it defines persons of Aboriginal descent in contrast to non-Aborigines . . . . That identity, whatever its outward manifestations, has *political implications*" (p. 528; my emphases).

257 Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 57.

258 Michael King, *Being Pakeha* (Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), p. 7.

259 King, pp. 18,19.

260 Awatere, p. 10.

261 Carroll Wall, "Te Pakeha: The Search for White Identity," *Metro*, 6, No. 65, (Nov. 1986), pp. 34-48.

262 Wall narrates the story of "the Pakeha and well-meaning Wellington group who went to see *Te Maori*. 'Isn't it glorious', one gushed. 'The whole concept moved me emotionally and spiritually.' What they didn't realise until later was that they had taken the wrong turning -- what they had just seen wasn't *Te Maori* at all but merely the standard Maori exhibition on display at the museum next door' (*Metro*, p. 36).

263 Simon During, "What was the West?" p. 79-80; citing Carol O'Biso, *First Light* (London: Heinemann, 1987), p. 75.

264 'Aotearoa' is the Maori name for New Zealand, and is used when a specifically Maori perspective is evoked.

265 Paul Smith, p. 72.

266 Smith, p. 25.

267 Smith, p. 73.

268 Smith, p. xxxiii.

269 John Mowitt, "Foreword: The Resistance in Theory," in Smith, p. xiv.

270 Grosz, pp. 106-7.

271 Kristeva, "Woman Can Never Be Defined," in Marks and de Courtivron, p. 137.

272 Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, p. 4.

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- 273 Catherine Clément, *The Lives and Legends of Jacques Lacan* (trans.) Arthur Goldhammer (Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 90, 91.
- 274 Kristeva, "Women's Time," in Toril Moi (ed.), *The Kristeva Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 193.
- 275 "Women's Time," p. 194.
- 276 "Women's Time," p. 194.
- 277 "Women's Time," p. 194.
- 278 "Women's Time," p. 195.
- 279 "Women's Time," p. 208.
- 280 "Women's Time," p. 209.
- 281 "Women's Time," p. 210.
- 282 Anika Rifflet-Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan* (trans. ) David Macey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 178; see also Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, p. 2.
- 283 Lloyd, p. 77.
- 284 Smith, p. 40.
- 285 Kate Grenville, *Lilian's Story* (1985; Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986).
- 286 Sally Morgan, *My Place* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1987).
- 287 Aritha Van Herk, *No Fixed Address* (1986; London: Virago Press, 1989).
- 288 For another discussion of nation as a gendered discussion, see Smaro Kamboureli, "Susan Swan's *The Biggest Modern Woman in [sic] the World: Canada as Absent Spouse*," *Australian-Canadian Studies*, 6, No. 1 (1988), pp. 103-111.
- 289 Grenville, p. 5. Subsequent citations will be followed by page numbers in brackets in the text.
- 290 See also Gerry Turcotte, "'The Ultimate Oppression': Discourse Politics in Kate Grenville's Fiction," *World Literature Written in English*, 29, No. 1 (1989), pp 64-85, for detailed discussion of this and other aspects of language, power, patriarchy and imperialism discussed in this chapter.
- 291 Althusser distinguishes between particular ideologies and ideology in general in *"Lenin and Philosophy" and Other Essays* (trans.) Ben Brewster (N.Y.: Monthly Review Press, 1971), p. 161.
- 292 Homi Bhabha, "The other question: difference, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism," in Francis Barker et.al. (eds) *Literature, Politics and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference, 1976-84* (London: Methuen, 1986), p. 154.

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293 Bhabha, "The other question," p. 167.

294 Bhabha, "The other question," p. 167.

295 Gary Boire uses this term in "Canadian (Tw)ink: Surviving the White-Outs," *Essays in Canadian Writing*, 35 (1987), pp. 1-16.

296 Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October*, 28 (1984), pp. 126,130.

297 Morgan states in a footnote to her text that "Mr A.O. Neville, Child Protector of Natives, Western Australia, 1915-1940" was "widely credited as a principal advocate and force behind an active policy of miscegenation in Western Australia through the 1930s. The legal removal of 'half-caste' Aboriginal children from their mothers was part of this policy," p. 211.

298 The complex question of identity in relation to paternity will be addressed in Chapter Five.

299 Aritha Van Herk, *No Fixed Address* (1986; rpt. London: Virago, 1989), p. 39.

300 This recalls two other Canadian novels: Marian Engel's *Bear* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1976), and Robert Kroetsch's *Badlands* (Toronto: new press, 1975). The former is also almost explicitly referred to in Van Herk's *The Tent Peg*. See Chapter Three.

## **SECTION II**

**ARTICULATING 'SELF' AND 'OTHER'**

**THROUGH QUESTIONS OF**

**AUTHORITY AND AUTHENTICITY**

## CHAPTER TWO

### WRITING (INTO) THE LAND

#### 2. I. Introduction.

The previous chapter illustrated the dialectic of place and placelessness as constitutive of subjectivity, and explored the implications of this in relation to texts of cultural commentary and in a selection of post-colonial fictional texts. While the emphasis was on the spatial characteristics of subjectivity in Chapter One, in Chapter Two it shifts to the 'subjective' constitution of spatiality. This shift is consistent with the focus, in Section II of the thesis, on discourses of thematic centrality to settler post-colonialism, and the reading of subject-position through these. Specifically, a similar dialectic of place and placelessness characterises the ambivalent, and I argue, inter-textual relationship to the land in post-colonial space. Writing constitutes that relationship, but also renders it an alienated one. Therefore, this chapter explores the textual constitution of relationships to the land both in the sense of the 'authority' it confers upon the claims of the post-colonisers, and the grounds of critique of colonisation it has provided for the post-colonised.

#### 2. II. Mapping the Land(scape) in Discourse.

The relationship to, or sense of belonging in the new land is a prominent feature of colonial texts, texts invariably written by explorers or settlers, and ranging from maps to journals and diaries, to imaginative literature such as poetry and fiction. The focus is on the physical relationship to the land, some of it intended to facilitate either real or imaginative access to the land, some of it describing the process of familiarising or 'taming' the land into landscapes conducive to settlement.<sup>1</sup>

The land is also a feature of literary texts of the nationalistic stage of the settler society. However, in such texts, the physical and psychical processes of adaption to the landscape have largely been accomplished, and although the land may constitute the site of economic struggles for survival, the place of land in such texts tends to be as repository of nationalist myths of the Outback, the Bush, the North and so on. Referring to the 'geographical fallacy' of measuring national identity by images from the geography or landscape of a country, Diana Brydon points out of the Canadian context

that "The image itself is less important than its function. Canoes and horses . . . are used to show human beings working in harmony with their new landscapes and forging a new sense of national identity." Similarly, making a comparison with the Australian context she argues that "the North and the Outback fulfill similar functions, often as civilisation's shadow, its suppressed self, and therefore to come to terms with the North or with the Outback is to come to terms with oneself and with one's life in that country."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, in its naturalising function, this construction of national myth serves to locate outside of history, and certainly outside of any need to confront history, the relationship between the nation and its emergence on colonised land.

Post-colonial texts which take the land as focus can be seen to problematise the settler relationship to the land, not in the physical sense found in colonial texts, but in political, cultural and ethical terms. On the other hand, the indigenous relationship to the land is represented as one of physical dispossession and dislocation while the cultural and ethical position is correspondingly strengthened. During's differentiation of 'post-coloniser' and 'post-colonised',<sup>3</sup> while acknowledging that any one individual may feel the impulses of both at various times, is a useful point in settler societies where nationalism does not speak for colonised indigenes. It is therefore a useful basis for analysis of responses to the colonial legacy. However, the allusion to the problems of division into two clearly demarcated 'sides' on the basis of racial or cultural heritage alone requires further emphasis. While understanding 'post-coloniser' and 'post-colonised' as discursive subject positions, rather than essential identities, it is important to remember that in the post-colonial context, discourse can never be *purely* anything. Only hybrid discourses exist, and such discourses, as shown in the previous chapter, speak symptomatically of the fractures which have generated them. Thus their force is less in their 'authenticity' in any sense that calls upon origins, than in their contestatory stance. These points will be elaborated and illustrated throughout this chapter in relation to discourses of the land.

2. II. (i) **Taking the Place of the Other.** In the Introduction to *Eight Voices of the Eighties*, Gillian Whitlock states that "Elizabeth Jolley has dubbed the 1980s a 'moment of glory' for the woman writer. . . when women writers and readers have entered the mainstream. Thea Astley takes a more general view when she typifies it as a 'decade of the

minorities."<sup>4</sup> Whitlock locates their coincidence in a broad social move from homogeneity to heterogeneity, and specifies 'national mythologies' as undermined by these changes. As the previous chapter showed, such phenomena may usefully be understood as so many facets of the advent of post-colonialism, in which the dominant discourse of nationalism is challenged by those whose voices have been suppressed in privileged constructions of national identity. Clearly the most fundamental suppression was that of the indigenous peoples who were dispossessed and displaced by British imperialism, and the colonial order of Australian, Canadian and New Zealand society out of which nationalism grew. However, post-colonialism in these settler societies is more complex than a 'post-coloniser - post-colonised' opposition because of the differential structures and levels of privilege among the white settlers themselves and the descendants of their cultural order. Therefore, while post-colonialism is characterised by the land claims and various political and cultural programmes of indigenous peoples, it also acknowledges the effects of a cultural history of dislocation for the descendants of the settlers, who while increasingly regarding themselves as indigenous Australians, Canadians and New Zealanders, both generate and experience the various failures of 'fit' between a European cultural inheritance, and a land whose features, climate, flora and fauna disrupt the continuity of that inheritance. However, post-colonialism further names the critique of dominant discourses of nationalism by those descendants of white settlers marginalised on account of gender, sexuality, class, age and national or cultural origins: in short, nationalism's 'Others'.

Post-colonialism in settler societies therefore comprises discourses which contest and fracture the fabric of nationalism. Further, in naming and addressing their colonial historical legacy, post-colonial discourses, while offering many and simultaneous sites of contestation, tend to privilege the indigenous subject position. Indeed, this is the era marked by the textual appearance of indigenous discourse, enabling the inter-textual dialogue which is not possible even in sympathetic representations of the indigene by the settlers and their descendants. However, as will be shown, there is a great difference between privileging the indigenous subject position, and politically privileging the indigene.

An historical, cultural and social ambivalence of 'place' or belonging in post-colonial society is often expressed in cultural and literary texts and

commentary in terms of relationships to the land and perceptions of the landscape. The differentiation of these terms often turns upon the opposition between historicised and unhistoricised concepts. For example, Susan Keogh cites Ken Gelder as referring to the difference between historicising and dehistoricising impulses in "land as it is owned and used, and *landscape* with its less historically specific connotations," while she herself refers to "an opposition between landscape -- between land as it is and land as it is seen and used by humans."<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, David Tacey claims that "It is apparent that our English word 'landscape' is wholly inadequate to describe what Aboriginals actually mean when they refer to 'land'. Land for them is the living spirit, a kind of collective unconscious which holds the memories, dreams and reflections of an entire people." He goes on to cite Judith Wright's objection to the term 'landscape', specifically that it "'involves . . . an irreconcilable difference of viewpoint. . . . It is a painter's term, implying an outside view, a separation, even a basis of criticism. We cannot set it against the reality of the earth-sky-water-tree-spirit-human complex existing in spacetime, which is the Aboriginal world.'"<sup>6</sup> However, post-colonialism requires among but perhaps above other things, the historicisation of all claims to knowledge or truth (including the indigenous), concomitant with the abandonment of universals. Therefore, any notion of an untouched environment, whether represented in 'land' or the primarily perceptual construct of 'landscape' poses certain ideological dangers, and particularly so in the post-colonial context. One such danger is overlooking the impossibility of perceiving land or landscape as such without perceptually shaping it in these terms, or imposing a reading practice upon it. It has been demonstrated, for example, that Australian Aboriginals in 'pre-colonial' times 'read' and 'wrote' the land and its signs within their own cultural framework.<sup>7</sup> Thus the imposition of Western textuality upon the land with colonisation was not the bringing of writing to an unwritten land (a view of colonisation held for instance by anthropologist Lévi-Strauss),<sup>8</sup> but a writing out, or a writing over, rendering the colonised land(scape) something more like a palimpsest. However, as will be shown, with the return of/to a textuality which is produced as an indigenous land ethic, or relationship between humanity and the land which must be understood as being constructed as reading/writing practices, the post-colonial relationship to the land is usefully understood as an inter-textual relationship. A second danger, related to that of characterising the 'pre-



colonial' land as unwritten and unread, is important in its implications for discursive politics: it is the danger of historical elision or misprision, of classifying as 'untouched' land which has been lived on, shaped and used by indigenous peoples. Such a view underlies the many colonial, and even some post-colonial assertions of the silence or the emptiness of the land. Therefore in this chapter, 'land' refers to the material or physical entity which may be occupied, bought, worked upon, or sold, and is an economic or material resource, while 'landscape' refers to the physically cultivated and perceptually shaped land. Although neither of these represents an idealised 'natural' state outside of human discourse, their separation is an idealist gesture, and must always be read as a convenient and provisional fiction.

Whether from the subject position of indigene or settler, post-colonised or post-coloniser, it can be argued that the land is only deceptively 'present' in even those post-colonial texts which treat land as more than a passive background to a discrete world of human action: rather, it stands as political, cultural, and ethical currency in transactions centred on belonging and authenticity. Indeed, in textualising land, it becomes part of an exchange economy. 'Textuality' names both the body of cultural and ideological practices in relation to land which constituted 'Australia', 'Canada' and 'New Zealand' in material ways as material realities, as well as the specific 'texts' in the more common sense governing physical access to land in these '(post-) colonised' nations -- maps, titles, contracts, advertisements, and even money as the 'sign' (of the possibility of ownership) which is exchanged for the 'thing'.<sup>9</sup> Of course it could be argued that the 'thing' is simply another 'sign', but the important point is the fact of exchange or exchangeability in constituting textuality. When land is present as language or discourse, it is language or discourse which is being exchanged, and in that exchange, land is symbolic of the real object of purchase, which in post-colonial society is belonging and authenticity.

It is in the post-colonial context that the ambiguity of the term 'belonging' is most pervasive in understanding relationships to land. The dominance of the settler subject position in colonial and national discourse resulted in the unproblematic dominance of notions of belonging in the sense of land ownership. Belonging in a more psychical way was held to be the 'natural' result of time and the imaginative or aesthetic appropriation of the land in accordance with the forms of

Western cultural production -- literature, landscaping, both forms of writing on or into the land. However, with the emergence of contestatory indigenous voices, the legitimacy of the actual historical transactions effecting land ownership and the ethics of property relations as the basis of access to land has been problematised. Along with this has been a problematisation of belonging in the associative sense for the descendants of the settlers. Authenticity is the new object of purchase, the term of an inviolable relation to the land. Further, the failure of the 'post-colonisers' to develop a legitimising discourse in relation to place, a basis of authenticity which does not profoundly question the whole basis of access to land and belonging to place which has been established from the time of colonisation, has meant that the entry of 'indigenous' discourse into the general cultural context, has been relatively smooth.

On the other hand, this has resulted in mixed success for the 'post-colonised' in terms of real political power. Their discourses have entered the 'market', been disseminated, and are in fact most likely to be 'bought' by those with the greatest purchasing power, the post-colonisers looking for authentication and indigenising identification. However, the process of entering the discursive market-place also involves modification by and submission to, the dominant market forces. In a situation analogous to the tourist-oriented marketing of indigenous cultures, or the workings of the publication industry, those with the buying power can choose attractive or amenable features of a discourse or a culture to appropriate, while others (of a more fundamentally threatening nature) languish as unmarketable. Thus a double paradox occurs, whereby the dominant culture seeks indigenous cultural products precisely as '*exotic*' features with which to adorn itself, a decorative gesture which leaves the institutional power structures intact, while at the same time absorbing the 'other' into itself, such that it merely expands and in the process neutralises the otherness of the other.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, in 'post-colonised' indigenous discourse, land is inextricably bound up with 'Land Rights', a concept whose meaning and whose application is inextricable from Western notions of justice and Western legal practices, the very practices whose failures and shortcomings generate the necessity of return to them. Post-colonised indigenes find themselves in the position of having to 'buy back' the land in accordance with legal processes utterly alien to traditional practices of land acquisition and access, and indeed on

terms far removed from traditional cultural norms. As Ian Palmer points out with regard to the Australian context:

the relationship of traditional Aborigines to their land is inconsistent with, or contradictory to the capitalist mode of production in Australia. Under the capitalist mode of production land is primarily a commodity contributing to the conditions of capitalist accumulation. . . . For traditional Aboriginal society, land is not a commodity. An Aborigine does not own the land but is rather of the land. An Aborigine's spiritual identity is linked to particular areas of land through the conception of the Dreaming.<sup>11</sup>

However, he goes on to refer to a perverse appropriation of this difference in the 1971 legal decision concerning the Aborigines at Gove in the Northern Territory's Arnhem Land, which used precisely this difference in significance of the land to disqualify Aboriginal land claims as inconsistent with the principles of dominant capitalist institutions and criteria. However, this is not to argue for the return to 'pre-colonial' traditions, but merely to point out that the hybridity of discourse compromises the unproblematic discernment of post-colonised and post-colonising discourses. Indeed, the importance of land rights has come to consist also in its symbolic status as "a symbolic demand for political recognition of Aborigines' dispossession of their lands," a recognition which has served to destabilise ideologically the whole white-dominated basis of land-ownership in Australia:

This ideological conflict operates in two ways. First it questions the assumption that Australia was a settled rather than a conquered country, since the demand for land is a demand for the return of land. Second, the question of land ownership is further complicated because any land given back -- without Aborigines participating in the Australian economic system by working and paying for the land - - questions the way in which others in Australian society have to purchase land.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, the concept of Land Rights has generated a proliferation of texts from both 'post-colonised' and 'post-coloniser' perspectives. In seeking to uncover the truth of the past, its rights and wrongs, and to posit just redresses and solutions for present and future, such texts demonstrate a basic trust in the ability of that very textuality which generated misunderstandings and injustices, to redress its own unreliability. Claudia Orange's *The Treaty of Waitangi* was published in 1987, sold out in its first print run almost immediately, and has gone into several reprints, winning

the Goodman Fielder Wattie Award in 1988.<sup>13</sup> It has been claimed that "Without Claudia's book, we'd be clawing each other's faces instead of sitting down calmly discussing what was intended and what was meant [at the time of signing]."<sup>14</sup> Further, in a side article entitled "Treaty Treatises: A Growth Industry," a further seven treaty-related books and collections of essays recently or soon to be published are listed,<sup>15</sup> while it has similarly been claimed of the Canadian context that "the area of Native rights has itself become a minor growth industry within academe".<sup>16</sup> The proliferation of texts may suggest the belief that truth lies in numbers, whether in the combined force of numbers, or in the higher probability of its discovery in any one or few texts. It may also be a measure of the anxiety of place which *can* only be addressed through discourse. Nevertheless, a truly authentic or *original* discourse of relationship to the land cannot exist: it can only be an evocation of that relation from within the post-colonial context. While the former certainties of nationalism have been questioned, post-colonising discourses have shown a notable ability to appropriate and adapt at leisure from the post-colonised while retaining, and in fact thus strengthening their basis in institutional power. Similarly, to the extent that indigenous peoples are successful in reclaiming ownership of and physical access to lands of which they were dispossessed, this is on the basis of evidence of moral priority, a *right* to the return of their land.

2. II. (ii). Land as Currency in Post-Colonial Discourse. The functioning of land as discursive currency can be illustrated by examining the cultural discursive context of post-colonial settler societies such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand. However, it is necessary first to address the question of the balance of discursive power between post-colonised and post-coloniser in each society. So far, my discussion has tended to derive largely from the New Zealand situation. There have been reasons for this, as well as reasons why this must now be addressed before proceeding. During has noted that New Zealand can be "characterised by the equilibrium of its postcolonising and postcolonial forces. In no other country are they so equally balanced." He is careful to distinguish the discursive politics to which this description applies from the political and economic power which is still dominated by the Pakeha. New Zealand is specifically differentiated from Australia, which he claims has "no effective postcolonised discourse" and therefore suffers "a crisis of [intellectual and discursive] emptiness" which is filled by "import

rhetoric."<sup>17</sup> During may wish to modify his view of Australia since this statement which was made in 1985, and particularly in the wake of the 1988 Bicentenary of white settlement and its discursive legacy. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly still true that New Zealand is more discursively balanced and thus complex, and for this reason, many features of post-colonial discourse are most clearly addressed in relation to this context.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, the study of post-colonial literature has produced few if any lessons more important to a decolonised reading ethic than the necessity to respect the specificities of place, and the avoidance and rejection of totalising schemas which replicate the movement of imperialist discourse across the globe. Therefore, some of the factors differentiating the discursive communities of Australia, Canada and New Zealand should be elucidated.

Writing of the politics of language in relation to national identity formations, Mark Williams differentiates Australia and New Zealand in the following terms:

The politics of language in Australia are generally uncomplicated by an identification with the indigenous peoples, and this is because the white Australians, by continuing to define themselves by reference to the historical wrong that saw the transportation of their forebears, by clinging so tenaciously to the rhetoric of the oppressed, have continued to deny the prior claims to injustice of the indigenous peoples.<sup>19</sup>

The important point here is that identification of, let alone with the 'victimhood' of the indigenous peoples, and with a 'colonialist' identity is compromised or inhibited by another available victim-position, which identifies Britain as the oppressor, and white Australian nationalism as its heroic decolonisation. There is no doubt entertained in such discourse that the status of victim is morally or ethically superior, however; simply the existence of such a position which, having been institutionalised in myth, resulted in an aggressive nationalism which effaced the "prior claims to injustice of the indigenous peoples." Similarly, as the previous chapter showed, the ideologies of liberalism and democracy which so strongly underlay Australian nationalist discourse gave rise to another available victim-position for the settlers and ethical exoneration for their descendants. This is the pitting of a working-class ethos against the systems of class privilege which again are associated with Britain. One specific focus of this ideology was the opposition of small land-holders to

the squatters, or large land-holders, who were more closely associated with the pernicious structures of *British* privilege. However, the difficulty faced by the Aboriginal people in countering a post-colonising with a post-colonised discourse is more complex than this. To cite Williams again:

The Aborigines are 'invisible' in Australia because their presence has failed to impress on the minds of their dispossessors the discomforting consciousness of being *other*, and this is not true of the Maori in New Zealand. Hence the lack of any Australian equivalents in common use of words like Aotearoa, the Maori name for New Zealand, or Pakeha, meaning non-Maori, which are used by both main racial groups in the country. Again, there is no Australian equivalent in general use of the Maori term, *tangata whenua*.<sup>20</sup>

It is correct to point to the impact of indigenous terms of identity (and in the context of this chapter, particularly of relationship to the land) as important factors in penetrating post-colonising consciousness and discourse. However, the lack of Australian equivalents is not clearly enough explained here. It works more as a cause than an effect of Aboriginal 'invisibility', the latter implied in the term 'hence', and it relates in significant part to the many Aboriginal languages and even cultures, and the resultant difficulties of constructing a unified discourse of 'Aboriginality' against Australia's post-colonising culture(s). A similar situation exists in Canada, where many different Indian and Inuit languages and cultures militate against a *unified* post-colonised discourse of difference, strong enough and pervasive enough to penetrate national consciousness, other than in English -- the language of the coloniser. On the other hand, it could be argued that regional consciousness of indigenous discourses is more relevant and more likely. By contrast, Maori society, although comprising important tribal cultural specificities, is relatively more unified, and apart from distinctions of dialect, monolingual. This is not to argue that an effective post-colonised discourse is impossible in Australia and Canada, only that its construction is fraught with more problems and with a more compromised status as 'authentic' or 'original' than that illusorily so judged in New Zealand. Indeed, the relative unity of the Maori language helps to mask the very inauthenticity of a unified Maori identity or discursive position as one necessarily post-colonially constructed.

The varying linguistic situations of each of the three societies has implications for a difficulty in terminology in a discussion of the three

together. Although it is not a unanimous preference, it is both possible and generally agreed to speak of Maori and Pakeha, the latter referring most often to New Zealanders of British descent, although technically referring to anyone not Maori. However, Polynesian, Asian and other immigrants and their descendants tend to be specified within the context of acknowledging New Zealand as a bi-cultural society. By contrast, there is no one self-endowed term of identity for Australian Aborigines or for Canadian Indians (Inuit is a culturally 'authentic' term, as is Maori, albeit in both cases terms of identification developed in response to the presence of 'others'). Their own terms are tribally or regionally specific. However, of even greater difficulty is establishing a term by which the post-colonial descendants of British settlers can be known. In Australia they have been known as 'white Australians' and as 'Euro-Australians', and Canadians have tended to be identified as 'English-Canadians', largely in distinction from French Canadians. In the current political climate, reference to colour is generally agreed to be at least anachronistic, at most politically offensive, with the concern for the inaccuracy of references to 'black' and 'white' somewhere in the middle. 'Euro-Australians' is also problematic both from the point of view of those Australians who are not Aboriginal but are also emphatically not of European background or descent, and those who may be of 'European' descent (and some point out even this inaccuracy or vagueness when it is specifically English descent which is referred to), but who are any number of generations removed from the reality of Europe/Britain, and identify solely as Australians. 'English-Canadian', a term which perhaps relates more to the language spoken than to the racial or national origins of its bearer, similarly effaces not only the specificities of Canada's more multi-cultural society, but even among those of British descent, hides the reality of the Scottish and Irish settlers subsumed under the label 'English'. This rehearsal of points already well made in other places relates to the very problematics of post-colonial identity in relation to place, post-colonial place in relation to the land. In this chapter, no one solution will be posited; the post-colonial condition could be argued to be more accurately evoked in the instability of its naming. As appropriate, reference will be made to settlers and indigenes, or to 'post-colonisers' and 'post-colonised'; post-colonial terms of indigenous identity will be used; and the term for the 'post-coloniser' employed in the specific texts under discussion will be employed.

Further distinctions can be made between the cultural contexts and discursive politics of Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The more vigorous nationalisms of Australia and New Zealand have provided not only available victim-positions for the post-colonisers, but also a stronger image of what is being contested by the discourses of post-colonialism. Canada's more insecure nationalism and stronger agenda of countering United States cultural and economic neo-imperialism have served to cast Canada itself as post-colonised, its 'post-colonial' discourses partaking of a multiplicity of subject-positions -- women, immigrants, as well as indigenes -- in gestures more redemptive than critical of nationalism.

To dismantle the terms 'post-coloniser' and 'post-colonised' used so far as suggestive of monolithic discourses or subject-positions would reveal the many supporting and cross-cutting positions which comprise them. Just as the discourse of nationalism has valorised male, white, heterosexual, secular or mainstream religious discourses, the post-colonial discursive context is just as much characterised by the emergence of multiple contestatory discourses of women, immigrants, sexual and religious minorities, as the indigenous position itself. Class is a more ambivalent positioning in relation to nationalism, particularly in Australia and New Zealand whose national ethos was founded on a democratic, egalitarian ethos, and perpetuated in a contempt for social privilege, frequently directly associated with the *British* class-system. Nevertheless, real social and economic privilege has always existed in both countries, and the effects of class deprivation have been strongly overdetermined by racial difference.<sup>21</sup> More to the point, white women, for example, who identify as oppressed by patriarchy have tended to qualify their 'post-coloniser' identification by positing a greater innocence in the face of the history of male colonisation, supported by their greater real (economic) problems of access to land ownership and other signs of material wealth. They articulate their oppression by a patriarchy which pervades both white and indigenous cultures; on the other hand, women who speak on behalf of indigenous movements have warned against regarding white women as allies against their oppression, finding their racial and historical origins more pertinent than their gender in contesting an oppressive society, and argue that even white women who do not own land, or who have no obvious connection to perpetrators of historical wrongs in relation to the land, have nevertheless benefited by the British colonisation of these lands, and the dispossession of their indigenous



inhabitants.<sup>22</sup> Immigrants also have available discursive identifications with other lands, histories and cultures, which may exonerate them from the colonial histories of their land of adoption; on the other hand they may be implicated in that history either in terms of having, like 'women', indirectly benefited from the dispossession of the indigenous peoples, or in indigenous discourses which characterise all arrivals to the land since colonisation, and their descendants, as 'immigrants'. Awatere refers to "the immigrants who invaded us," and argues that "All immigrants to [Aotearoa/New Zealand] are guests of the tangata whenua. . . . It matters not what generation born New Zealanders they are. Every white is an intruder who remains only by dint of force."<sup>23</sup> Thus they are guilty by linguistic association.

Despite the discursive complexity of post-colonialism, an earlier point is worth re-iterating. There tends to be an underlying privileging of the indigenous subject position; and other discourses of contestation, as well as those which comprise 'post-coloniser'-dominated nationalism, increasingly make use of elements of the indigenous contestation in their own (re)affirmation of place or belonging. In this (re)affirmation, itself an index of the anxiety attendant upon its subjection to ethical and discursive challenge, the land occupies a key position as a symbol of originality, authenticity and, by implication, belonging. The preceding discussion has been intended to show the variations in post-colonial discursive context among Australia, Canada and New Zealand, and in particular aspects influencing the respective balances of 'post-colonised' and 'post-colonising' elements. It is, of course, almost impossible to evaluate this balance of discursive power without immersion in each cultural context, and in particular, without vigilant attention to all facets of the media, as well as educational trends and legal and political records. However, in the context of the following illustration of the existence of post-colonising anxiety in relation to a legitimate place on the land, it is not a demonstration of discursive balance that is important in establishing the presence of such anxiety, but more simply a matter of demonstrating the existence of a post-colonised discourse whose terms both generate and determine the expressions of this anxiety. In this way, a discursive 'battle' can be posited, although on the surface it may look less like a battle and more like an attempt to conform even more strongly with the 'opposing' discourse than the 'opposition' does itself. Yet what is this competition, if not a war of inauthentic authenticities? Although it is not the complete

picture, it is a valid part of it to derive the terms of the debate from cultural and literary commentary in recently published texts and major journals. Although these may not be forums available to or chosen by discourses whose contestation is positioned outside existing power structures, they are the sources most accessible to those in positions of educational, social and political influence, and whose influence shapes the visible signs of the discursive struggles for authentic belonging in relation to the land. Further, they form a basis for an inter-textual reading of post-colonial fiction to follow.

For example, the participation in cultural and critical debate of the once-secure post-colonising voice is witness to insecurities and anxieties of legitimacy and ethical place in post-colonised space which is expressed in frequent assertions of that place in terms of the purchase of authenticity granted the Maori, and specifically the 'traditional' Maori relation to the land. In the 1972 essay, "Home," Bill Pearson differentiates his enjoyment of Australia from his sense of place in New Zealand, saying that "to use Maori terms, here I am tangata whenua, a native, and I hope I have turangawaewae, my native earth beneath me and the right to stand forward and speak."<sup>24</sup> However, his subsequent reflection on the state of race relations in that country is followed by the more insecure question, "What right have I to claim turangawaewae in this place?"<sup>25</sup> a question reiterated by Michael Neill in 1985.<sup>26</sup>

There are common features of such projects of self-examination. Metaphors of the landscape are used to evoke the cultural and political inheritances of colonialism for the descendants of the settlers. Neill refers to "those discomforts and anxieties produced by living on that historical and geographical 'fault-line,'" and states that "a fault-line runs between my two senses of the past."<sup>27</sup> He recounts "the discovery of a landscape which to me seemed frighteningly trackless and unmarked," and variously describes aspects of the post-colonial condition as "complex displacement," a "sense of exile," and a "sense of dislocation."<sup>28</sup> This sense of 'dislocation' is invoked by David Tacey, who describes as necessary the process of "sending down life-sustaining tap-roots into our soil,"<sup>29</sup> a metaphor echoed but problematised in Peter Beatson's reference to the Pakeha perception of the function of the Maori to "act as soil for our rootless behaviour. . . . to be soul-manure for the white parasite."<sup>30</sup> It is not only the physical but the psychological and discursive sense of identity or

dislocation which is 'landscaped'. Beatson characterises culture and discourse as politically determined and demarcated land, claiming "I have no wish and no expertise to trespass into the domain of uniquely Maori culture."<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Peter Simpson refers to his "mental landscape," and recalls an earlier "subterranean existence as a New Zealander," and the need at this time for a "decolonisation of my thinking."<sup>32</sup>

Deference and doubt is evoked in the vocabulary, the syntax, and even the punctuation of claims of their land of residence as 'home'. Neill refers to the "problematic right to belong,"<sup>33</sup> while Tacey argues that "In the deep outback . . . the very landscape, the backyard, the dirt sidewalk itself, tells the white man that he is intruding and that his European culture is puny or out-of-place."<sup>34</sup> Beatson expresses doubt and deference more personally, evoking it in self-conscious references to the function of language in articulating place. He recalls, "When I returned to 'my' country, I was shocked out of my complacent assumptions concerning my right to that possessive pronoun."<sup>35</sup> He goes on to describe the "confrontation of a European New Zealander with a country he had mistakenly believed to be familiar," and concludes that "I as a person of purely British descent am forced to rethink the meaning of my presence in the South Pacific."<sup>36</sup> Michael King refers to the same questioning when he argues that "The confidence with which many Maori have been able to say who they are and where they come from has led many Pakeha to ask precisely the same questions about themselves."<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, the narratives frequently contain a 'home-coming' passage, or denote a home-coming movement, 'home' being a revitalised, 'decolonised' expression of the relation to the land of residence. Beatson's 'home-coming' after an absence of fourteen years from New Zealand is accompanied by the description of a more 'authentic' view of his place formed, ironically, in terms of an overseas situation. Calling on the situation of the Pied Noirs, the white Algerians of several generations driven into exile in France, he claims that "If I am to remain in this country it is as a British Pied Noir. The difference is that here the Europeans have not been driven out and it is therefore the Maori who live in exile on their own soil."<sup>38</sup> However, the other central aspect of his 'home-coming' is "the act of reading -- of being confronted by -- Maori literature."<sup>39</sup> Neill's 'home-coming' is similarly double-edged. New Zealand's ambiguous place as 'home' at a time when even born and raised

residents of that country referred, and returned, to England as 'home', is the context for the description of his childhood arrival in -- or return to, if it is 'home' -- New Zealand. However, in contrast to the "city . . . naively persuaded of its essential Englishness,"<sup>40</sup> his *authentic* home-coming, to a sense of self, a sense of the past, and a sense of place, occurs as the title of the article suggests, in his involvement in teaching post-colonial literature, a course in which the texts are "from twelve countries, three continents, and two oceans; but all . . . are 'about' New Zealand."<sup>41</sup> Simpson's similarly plural -- and plurivalent -- homecomings are begun discursively with an account of a "rare and memorable return to my point of origin, especially appropriate perhaps in this year of revisiting our national origins."<sup>42</sup> His location of both in Golden Bay constitutes a discursive authentication of his place, his 'right to belong'. However, Simpson's account also includes an earlier and pivotal return from overseas. While in Canada he had discovered "deep similarities between New Zealand and Canadian cultural experience with regard to the dilemma of divided consciousness and other features of the post-colonial condition."<sup>43</sup> The eventual personal crisis he describes is focused on literary dislocation and division, in which he was "sick of being a New Zealander teaching English literature to the Canadians."<sup>44</sup> Upon returning to New Zealand and complementing his interest in New Zealand culture, especially art and literature, with involvement in the Australian, Canadian, African, West Indian and Pacific literatures, he exemplifies once again the experience of 'home' for the post-coloniser being more authentically perceived through the similarities to and differences from the cultures and literatures of elsewhere.

Finally, there are frequent assertions of a special, deep relationship with the land that appropriates an approximation of the indigenous relation conditioned by spirituality, ancestry and familiarity. Michael King describes in sensuous detail the memory of childhood pleasure when he "liked to get up before dawn and make [his] way down to the beach through the macrocarpas and pines. . . . [T]he sun would be lighting the crests of the hills around the harbour, and they seemed to hang on the sharp clean air."<sup>45</sup> Then, as an adult, he invokes a spiritual or psychic, rather than simply sensuous response: "When I go to a new place, or visit a familiar one, I instinctively look first for the shapes on the land and the middens that indicate where the first inhabitants of that place chose to make their home and gather food. I am drawn to and comforted by the

psychic residue of their presence."<sup>46</sup> He finds, in a further gesture of identification, that "the exploration of roots has led to a deeper understanding of my genetic inheritance; and -- perhaps paradoxically -- to a deeper feeling of sympathy for and identification with the tangata whenua of New Zealand in their post-colonial travail."<sup>47</sup> Tacey similarly describes his own attunement to the "spirit of place which challenges the Euro-Australian [which] is an almost physical sensation in central Australia. . . . I felt this sensation as liberating, not threatening."<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the assertion of attunement, which can be understood as being generated by an underlying anxiety -- what exactly is it a 'liberation' from? -- is suggestively grounded in that anxiety when he recalls that his Aboriginal school-mates "saw the landscape through non-Western eyes. . . . Their eyes surveyed an animated, rhythmic landscape, one from which I felt annoyingly excluded."<sup>49</sup> Simpson's assertion of attunement to the landscape evokes identification with the spirit of place through an indigenisation which marks him as, in Bhabha's words, "almost the same but not quite," as knowledge and instinct, the consciousness of something special and unconscious identification, compete with and set up mutual disturbances in each other:

Largely because of attitudes passed on by my parents, I grew up with a reverence for the indigenous plant and bird life of New Zealand. I could identify virtually every bird and tree to be found in the bush, and knew many of them by their Maori names. I grew up with the feeling that there was something special and precious about things that were native to this land, with which I instinctively identified myself. When I later learned about the reverence for the land of the tangata whenua, the people of the land, I felt a strong and immediate empathy.<sup>50</sup>

However, it is necessary to examine the content of such discourse for the political gestures it effects. The tone of such discourse is frequently 'confessional' and Foucault has shown the role of confession as a technology of power in the production of 'truth'. However, the apparently liberating effect on the subject of this production of 'truth' effaces its basis in power, both the power exerted on the subject to produce the confession, and the power that the confession itself has in the general circulation of discourses to be accepted as truth (and deriving from its basis in religious institutions, absolution):

the obligation to confess is now relayed through so many different points, is so deeply ingrained in us, that we no longer perceive it as

the effect of a power that constrains us; on the contrary, it seems to us that truth, lodged in our most secret nature, "demands" only to surface; that is it fails to do so, this is because of a constraint that holds it in place.<sup>51</sup>

It can be argued that the pressure to 'confess' is central to the post-colonial cultural and historical context of anxiety and 'guilt'. Similarly, there is also a tendency to express close relationships to the land in terms of childhood reminiscences, a gesture which putatively minimises the part of culture in its maximisation of 'the natural' and 'innocence' (children being believed to be less acculturated than adults, and therefore 'naturally' closer to nature). This gesture is highly problematic in its elision of the centrality of culture in relationships to the land, the inescapability of learned reading practices in any culture's construction of a land ethic. On the other hand, this discourse is characterised by expressions of sincerity and disavowals of the intention to appropriate indigeneity.<sup>52</sup> However, the textual dissemination of discourses makes it inevitable that appropriation will occur.

2. II. (iii). Textual Mediation of Relationships to the Land. The analyses of textuality in Derrida's science of grammatology, as effected in the practice of deconstruction, have considerable relevance to this aspect of analysis of the post-colonial condition. As Norris notes, "It is the 'tension between gesture and statement' . . . which 'liberates the future of a general grammatology.'"<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, a truly deconstructive stance cannot hold 'gesture' and 'statement' in discrete opposition. In liberating the "'free play' or element of undecidability"<sup>54</sup> within a statement, the suppressed "'force' or animating pressure of intent which exceeds all the bounds of structure,"<sup>55</sup> and which constitutes its textuality frequently by the exposure of a root metaphor of that very term that is suppressed, there is a danger that the metaphor of the suppressed term (the gesture) will be privileged over the surface content of the utterance (the statement), or what is 'done' over what is 'said'. This gesture/statement distinction is analogous to the speech/writing one, and risks privileging the speech-like 'self-presence' and activity of gesture over the absence and 'promiscuity' of language. Actions appear to 'speak' not only louder but truer than words! However, even the 'speaking' of actions, or gesture, is discursive in the broadest sense, and similarly in the broadest sense, textual. Therefore, priority cannot be attributed to gesture in the discursive quest for 'truth', but contradiction can be noted. Specifically, rather than discrediting such

assertions of sincerity in gestures doomed, in the larger political context, to work against intention, it is enough merely to point out the contradiction, while holding that the intention not to appropriate is as 'true' as the inevitability of appropriation. It is inevitable because once an 'authentic' indigenous connection to the land is articulated in discourse, it is subject to the condition of textuality. In its dissemination, its free-floating existence, it lacks anything other than a 'legal' tie to the originating subject(-position), a tie which as the last chapter showed, is constituted by the very doubts that produce it, or make it necessary.

It is worth considering why land is valorised in the attempt to re-affirm the certainty of place in the post-colonial context. As noted earlier, it is not a reflection of a real crisis of access for the 'post-colonisers'. It can be argued that land serves as a symbol of authenticity and belonging because of its centrality to post-colonised contestatory discourse, perhaps even further because of a sublimated *equation* of indigenes and the land. The first of these is not difficult to demonstrate. Awatere has described as central to the project of Maori sovereignty "the Maori ability to determine our own destiny . . . from the basis of our land and fisheries. . . . [It] seeks nothing less than the acknowledgement that New Zealand is Maori land, and further seeks the return of that land." Of Aboriginal politics and discourse, Bruce McGuinness similarly argues that "with everything that happens throughout Australia, there is always a component of Aboriginal involvement. This usually has to do with land," and that "All our struggles aim towards that one area of ultimately achieving the land back so that we can become truly economically independent, so that we can achieve our own ends."<sup>56</sup> Clearly, land is the basis of traditional indigenous economy, spirituality, and social order, as well as of cultural mythologies of origins and identity. However, the 'post-colonising' equation of the indigene and the land, such that indigenous identification is a fortuitous rewriting into the land, a reconstruction of the origin in order to place the post-colonial self already there, elides, as mentioned earlier, precisely these elements of *culture* in an evocation of a pre-cultural innocence. The emphasis is therefore on spirituality, a move which further elides the embarrassments not only of history, but of the inequities in the post-colonial political and economic orders.

But it would be politically naive to attribute the longing for an approximation for an indigenous relationship to the land to the strength

of post-colonised discourse in its politically contestatory moment. There is yet another reason why the emphasis on spirituality as a basis of connection to land is attractive to post-colonising discourse. Such discourse arises in a national and international context of urbanisation, industrialisation, and an increasingly crisis-ridden capitalism, and caters to a nostalgia for permanence and for a direct relation to the processes of productivity alienated by industrial capitalism. The gesture of post-colonised discourses in pointing to the spiritual emptiness of post-colonial society, has served to provide a focus for post-colonising discursive appropriation and legitimation. But it also serves to allow the latter to conflate the indigenous relationship to the land and spirituality in a manner exclusive of economic and cultural considerations.<sup>57</sup> Thus a series of binary oppositions arises: indigene/settler; spiritual/material; nature/culture; land/urbanism. Deployed by 'post-colonisers' who enjoy greater material wealth and political power, it is a relatively easy, indeed satisfying gesture to supplement the sense of spiritual emptiness deriving from the alienations effected by urban industrial culture, with an appropriated spirituality, closeness to nature, and belonging to the land, thus indigenising and legitimising (although the latter is no longer necessary if the indigenous identification has been complete) the post-colonising place. The structures of urban industrial capitalist society remain intact, as do the advantages of modernisation, and importantly, the systems of distribution of the advantages, power and wealth. Spirituality is conceived as something radically other than, and sealed from the effects of economic, political and cultural matters, which are necessities to be 'suffered', a suffering made easier by spiritual supplementation. Post-colonised discourse is complicit in this construction in its positing of an unsullied spirituality as surviving to differentiate the indigenous relationship to the land from that of the post-colonisers.<sup>58</sup>

It is within this post-colonial discursive context that the fictional texts discussed in this chapter have been produced. The writers have entered into post-colonial discursive constructions of the land, and in the process of turning the land into language, or reading and writing the land, exemplify many of the features of the hybridity of post-colonial discourse. It would be fatuous to make assertions of direct correspondence between the writers discussed and their own degree of anxiety (even that anxiety masquerading as certainty, but disclosing the need to assert certainty borne of doubt)<sup>59</sup> regarding their place in relation to the land. However, some



texts and some of their immediate inter-textualities -- interviews, essays by the writers -- are suggestive of this. Such interviews and essays are a valid part of the discursive context within which the fictions are placed.

For example, the particular ambivalences effected by the mediation of the text in Elizabeth Jolley's fiction can perhaps be illustrated by way of briefly focusing on Jolley herself. Information about Jolley from interviews, and biographical and autobiographical articles, suggests many points of similarity between her life and aspects of characters and settings in her novels and stories.<sup>60</sup> Too numerous to list comprehensively here, they include the fact that like Weekly in *The Newspaper of Claremont Street*,<sup>61</sup> she was originally from the industrial Black Country of the English Midlands. Also like Weekly, and Mother in "The Last Crop"<sup>62</sup> and "A Gentleman's Agreement,"<sup>63</sup> she has worked as a cleaner. She has spent time in boarding-school and nursing institutions, settings which figure in *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*,<sup>64</sup> *Mr Scobie's Riddle*,<sup>65</sup> *My Father's Moon*,<sup>66</sup> and *Cabin Fever*,<sup>67</sup> and she has conducted creative writing classes, which Miss Porch's activities in *Foxybaby*<sup>68</sup> could loosely be termed, while other aspects of that experience have been captured in "The Long Distance Lecture".<sup>69</sup> Indeed, like her, many of her characters are novelists or story writers: Miss Porch, Diana Hopewell, Miss Hailey, and Jasmine in the story "Woman in a Lampshade."<sup>70</sup> The strong Viennese aspect of her background from her mother is worked into the many German-speaking characters, and those whose tastes in and knowledge of food, music and literature, derive from that part of Europe. Such characters can be found in *Palomino*,<sup>71</sup> *Milk and Honey*,<sup>72</sup> and others. Further, and perhaps most clearly germane to the topic of this chapter, her Western Australian landscape includes the wheatbelt, and like many of her characters, she has bought a five-acre piece of land, and cultivates a goose farm and an orchard. These details combine to suggest that Jolley's *oeuvre* constitutes a process of writing herself into the land as she writes about characters who attempt to do the same. Indeed, the centrality of the specific Western Australian landscape to her writing suggests two things. She does not universalise the idea of Australia or land, but remains specific to the region which, as a region, could also be seen as one of nationalism's contestatory 'Others'. Yet this contestation could itself be seen as compromised by the fact that her literary challenge to the notion that *Australia* is on the eastern sea-board, while she inhabits a *region* in the West, has been explained both in terms of a belief and a pride in the

necessity of 'regionalism' for all Australia -- a decentring gesture -- and in her reference to "a country like Western Australia," which could be seen as a redrawing of the circle, and a recentring of self and place.

The process of centring herself in Western Australia has involved the constant 'close reading' and writing of that land, evident in her many detailed descriptions of landscapes. Given the dominant notion, in Western metaphysics, of a centred subjectivity, it follows that any subject who reads and writes the land, reads and writes the self into the land. While such close readings constitute a response to the post-colonial problem of belonging or connection to the land in the context of the historical and cultural pull of Europe, and the lack of 'fit' with Eurocentric perceptions, their authenticity is constantly compromised by the very fact of their textuality, the exchange of the 'sign' for the 'thing'. This is most clearly demonstrated in the fact that Jolley appropriates and shapes the land for literary purposes. In a radio interview, she pointed out that her fictional landscapes have been composed of fragments taken from different places, and combined into an imaginative whole which she sees very clearly.<sup>73</sup> For example, the road bridge, the dog-leg of land, and the shepherd's cottage which figure in *The Well*,<sup>74</sup> have all been taken from different places. However, as in all of her writing, while the combination is imaginative, it is governed by a concern for the integrity of geographical possibility. In the same interview she pointed out that "Anybody coming to my farm, for example, hoping to see the landscape of *Palomino* won't see it exactly," and yet readers have clearly been convinced by the evocative detail of her descriptions such that this is exactly what they expect to do: "One or two people have come up to the orchard and they've looked around and they've said, 'Oh, but this should be a bit steeper here . . .'" Such examples only underline further the dominance of textually mediated relationships to the land: the ambivalent authority and inauthenticity of the text.

Whereas Jolley's writing produces something like fictionalised versions of herself, writing through them aspects of her own relationship to, and feelings for, the land, Rudy Wiebe takes an historical character and 're-replaces' him both in history and a literary and cultural tradition, and through these, on the land. Wiebe has declared, for example, that "The Indian ... must become our central, not our fringe figure. . . ; he must become the center of serious fiction as other groups have."<sup>75</sup> As will be

shown, the question of who 'our' refers to in relation to literary figures begins to problematise the project of placing, even 'centring' Big Bear. Further, on closer scrutiny, the distance between Jolley's 'invented' characters -- read, at least by those with some literary sophistication, unproblematically as literary constructs -- and Wiebe's 'real person in history' is not so great. The Big Bear Wiebe produces is indeed an historical 'figure' or 'character', a literary and even fictionalised construct, a 'body' of language whose place is precisely in the narrative of history. Wiebe acknowledges Big Bear's ambivalent status when he describes Big Bear as "an ideal novel subject because he is a great and wise man who lives a tragic life."<sup>76</sup> Big Bear did not therefore precede the narrative; he was constructed to suit the narrative's (epic) purpose. Further, the narrative did not simply reflect history's events; it was constructed to be part of a pre-conceived tradition.

It is therefore necessary to place at the beginning (not the origin) of the process Rudy Wiebe himself, that is, the discursive constructions of Rudy Wiebe in essays and interviews, and his inter-textual relationship to this project of literary placement. Characterising Wiebe's writing of Big Bear back into the land as "something resembling a cultural crusade," W.J. Keith shows that it has been generated very much out of Wiebe's ambiguous personal relationship to the land, a mixture of belonging, such that "Wiebe first became attracted to Big Bear . . . for what might loosely be called sentimental motives, the fact that his own birthplace lay in the area in which Big Bear and the remnants of his band of Plains Cree had wandered half a century before,"<sup>77</sup> and alien-ness in Wiebe's position as "a Canadian at two removes from the Canadian land, separated not only by the traditions and beliefs of his [Mennonite] people, but also by their language (he did not begin to speak English until he went to school)."<sup>78</sup> Wiebe inherited both a spiritual tradition of closeness to the land, a "religious vision, a seriousness of purpose, and a painful experience as a minority group living close to the land," and an 'acculturated' distance, including his school education which, Wiebe claims, forced him to "discover the past of my place on my own as an adult, [and] . . . inadvertently roused an anger in me which has ever since given an impetus to my writing."<sup>79</sup>

Wiebe's writing of *The Temptations of Big Bear*<sup>80</sup> took him on journeys characterised in land-reading terms as following "on the trail of

Big Bear." Yet this journey into the land was inextricable from, and generated by writing, in numerous senses. Not only was the writing of the novel his motivation to travel, but, he notes, "One of the most enjoyable experiences of writing the novel was visiting every place *where it was recorded* Big Bear had been."<sup>81</sup> Thus Big Bear's tracks on the land were written records, and evidence that the trail had been followed before. Further, as well as textuality taking Wiebe into the land, the land became, both through Wiebe's literary purpose which differentiated it in terms of relevance and irrelevance to that purpose, and through his perceptual gaze, *landscape*, in Wiebe's transformation of it into text and inter-text: "As we travelled this world, we took such pictures of it as we could, and sometimes I would look at them again as I was writing."<sup>82</sup>

The frequent use of archaeological metaphors both by Wiebe's commentators and Wiebe himself to describe the process of his research also links writing and land. He is described as "delving into the past of the Canadian land,"<sup>83</sup> and, referring to Big Bear's story, he asks himself, "Can I dig it out? Will I be dare to look at it once I have, if I dare, unearthed it?"<sup>84</sup> Such archaeological metaphors suggest the solid integrity of the story: it is *there*, in its physical (albeit fractured or incomplete) form, only waiting to be found and recognised for what it is. In literary terms, it is a metaphor (ironically) predicated upon the assumption that language is transparent to reality; it merely reflects reality in complete fidelity to truth. However, archaeological metaphors also betray their own historicity, and the centrality, not of the 'discovery', but of the archaeologist who 'recognises' its significance, status and meaning *as* a discovery. Similarly, the archaeologist's relationship to the land is one that is determined by the prior burial of what is discovered, generally by the erasure from the surface of the land of one culture, and its replacement by an imposed other: in short, colonisation in its cultural genocide moment. Wiebe would presumably not disagree with this: his repeated allusion to 'daring' to face his discovery suggests some sort of moral crisis in relation to the past it represents. Further, it is precisely the burial of the Indian tradition which causes him to ask "'Why was Canada called a 'young' country? White men reckoned places young or old as they had time to re-mould them to their own satisfaction. As often, to ruin."<sup>85</sup> But what is the archaeologist's place in relation to this process? Is it not precisely archaeologists who participate, along with geologists, in the 'dating' of artifacts and the cultures from which they derive? Is not the

archaeologist's presence dependent on the prior absence of an earlier culture? Even more telling is Wiebe's description of his researches as "like finding a bone, a petrified bone down by the creek and then I find the rest of it, and then I piece together the pieces that make the dinosaur."<sup>86</sup> The implication of finding pieces of the extinct dinosaur as an analogy to the story of Big Bear is clearly seen when it is remembered that such remains find their way into museums, to be seen at leisure by those who regard them as curiosities profoundly separate from the realities of their own lives. In other words, Wiebe's gesture of writing Big Bear back into the land actually writes him out of the land, and substitutes for him Wiebe's own intentional gaze,<sup>87</sup> his own journey, contained within his own post-colonial discourse.

Thus Wiebe's evocation of Big Bear's presence is both predicated on, and takes the form of, his radical absence. In ways which will be explored later in the chapter, Wiebe's presence on and in the land is deeply connected to Big Bear's absence. However, even recognition of this, and resultant feelings of a guilty heritage which must be atoned for or rectified, implicates the post-colonial subject in moral and ethical complexities. The impulse to atone by sympathetic identification with Big Bear appears to underlie Wiebe's assertion that for him, "the most important people who are going to read that book are Indian people. To see how they respond to it and whether they feel genuine things are happening is a lot more important than certain kinds of white response."<sup>88</sup> Wiebe seeks Indian 'approval' and affirmation, but one must ask what the implications of such approval might be, both for him -- for post-colonisers --, and for Indian people -- the post-colonised. Speaking of the trial speeches of Big Bear that Wiebe admits he had to invent because of the lack of documentation of his words at this point, Indian writer Maria Campbell is cited as stating that she did not believe it was Wiebe, but rather Big Bear's spirit speaking through Wiebe, which was responsible for the speeches.<sup>89</sup> On the one hand, such an assertion increases Big Bear's textual 'presence', to some extent writing Big Bear out of his own text. On the other hand, it confers Big Bear's spirit in Wiebe, effecting, even in his mediating function, his spiritual indigenisation. It goes some way towards justifying statements such as that "Through creative understanding, he has become a spiritual descendant of Dumont, Big Bear, and Wandering Spirit; he has made the history of Western Canada his own."<sup>90</sup> As a spiritual descendant of victims of colonisation, has he not produced a victimhood for himself

which exonerates him from the 'guilty' history of the colonisers? He has written himself into the Western Canadian land.

A final semantic duplicity, an element of textual undecidability, illustrating the post-colonial crisis of legitimacy, occurs when Eli Mandel attempts to evoke something even closer than the effect of Wiebe's sympathetic identification with Big Bear. He tells Wiebe, "that great speech of Big Bear's" was "as if you'd invested yourself in the Indian character in some way."<sup>91</sup> But even if the meaning of 'invested' is derived from the Latin word for clothing, and suggests the Christian sense of clothing oneself in or with something, the word also invokes the terminology of capitalism. The latter sense is ironically appropriate in the context of the capitalist moment of colonisation, but misfiring in intent by suggesting instead Wiebe's profiting by Big Bear's alienation. If this seems like focusing unfairly on the infelicities of language and semantics, the point is not to hold Wiebe responsible -- to suggest his subjective mastery - - but on the contrary it is an illustration of the pervasiveness of an economic ethos throughout post-colonial discourse, including cultural discourse. There is a similarly ambiguous moment towards the end of this interview with Mandel. One reading would be consistent with the notion of investing oneself in another's character; however, another possible reading relates to the notion of post-colonising appropriation and even exploitation of the indigene's history of alienation from the land:

Mandel: "Edward Bond . . . says in the preface to [*Bingo*], 'Every man writes in another man's blood'. Do you think that's so?"

Wiebe: "I don't know whose blood I'm working in."

Mandel: "Well, Big Bear's, I suppose. What the question means to me is that there is a moral problem. What do you see as the moral concern of the Canadian writer?"<sup>92</sup>

At the very point that the crucial issue is approached, it is as if it is judged just in time to be too personal, perhaps tactless, and Wiebe is 'let off the hook' in favour of a diluted question about the moral concerns of Canadian writers. Yet it was neither necessary, nor even appropriate that the question be regarded as personal. Rudy Wiebe is a product of his cultural context. Keith points out that Wiebe:

grew up at a time when the cultural heritage of those who belonged neither to the English- nor the French-Canadian peoples was just

beginning to make its mark on imaginative writing. It was also a time when the history of native peoples was arousing interest as a new generation began to scrutinize its national inheritance.<sup>93</sup>

Similarly, Dick Harrison places Wiebe within a cultural context which is vaguely sensed, but sensed before Wiebe's reinforcement of its validity: "The impression that contemporary novelists are attracted to the Indian as a link with the land they have been alienated from is reinforced by the fact that the most thorough exploration of Indian culture is carried out by Rudy Wiebe."<sup>94</sup>

A greater understanding of context, a questioning of its characteristics, is more valuable than attributing personal blame for sincere gestures whose actual implications and results are more complex than can be controlled; in short, which are embroiled in textuality. More importantly, this chapter seeks to place these texts as participants within the overall cultural and discursive context, not only as 'utterances' but as 'gesture', and it is the tensions among these which are explicated. This explication seeks out the reading and writing strategies which position the text in relation to the land, or the land in relation to language. It will demonstrate the *writing* in the Derridean sense which obtrudes in such forms as metaphor to betray the suppressed values of the texts constructions of "landscape."<sup>95</sup>

## 2. III. Post-colonial Critiques of Colonisation.

One feature of post-colonial discourse regarding the land and human relationships to it is the critique of the effects of colonisation in dispossessing the indigenous inhabitants in order to effect the settlement of the colonisers. However, when produced from a 'post-colonising' subject position there is a tendency to idealise and to contain the dispossessed culture, and by implication the colonising ethos, within structures of binary oppositions such as nature/culture, innocence/guilt, spirituality/materialism, land/urbanism, authenticity/inauthenticity. (The term 'ethos' has been used because the idea of a colonising *culture* is somewhat reductive, since many 'cultures' participated in colonisation; similarly, it is necessary to avoid the implication that a particular culture is inherently a colonising one. At the same time, the notion of a colonising culture is pre-emptive, since what would become a more coherent or cohesive *colonial* culture is the effect rather than the cause of

colonisation.) On the other hand it could be argued that there is also a tendency for texts from a 'post-colonised' position to idealise their own cultural past. Because what is represented is inevitably a culture reconstructed in relation to colonial disruption, it is therefore also inevitably a redemptive representation. In a context in which indigenous culture is selectively espoused by the dominant culture (the idealised, 'picturesque' elements valorised in colonising and post-colonising texts), it is an understandable move on the part of the post-colonised to remove those elements bound to be unacceptable and therefore politically inhibiting. While this may simply perpetuate the museumification of the culture, and thus compromise a political agenda of total cultural freedom, it may also be argued that to reach even post-colonised subjects as readers, those whose cultural conditioning has been so largely affected and even effected by the dominant post-colonising culture, such 'accessible' and 'attractive' features are of most use, whatever the full origins and implications of their attractiveness to the culture which displaced their own.

*The Temptations of Big Bear* comprises, among other things, a post-colonial critique of colonisation and its impact both on the land and on the order of human relationships to the land. It is a critique which is predicated on the understanding of colonisation as the bringing of writing to the land, instituting a Manichean conflict of oppositions. On the immediate level these oppositions are founded on the pervasive conflict between speech and writing; however these can be seen to align with the underlying opposition of presence and absence, the former terms associated with Big Bear and the Indian people, while the latter are associated with the white colonisers.

Through his use of imagery in descriptions of the land and both Indian and white responses to it, Wiebe suggests the unwritten, undifferentiated character of the land in traditional Indian habitation which allows unrestricted movement. Yet colonisation is well underway, and apart from white references to "unmapped wilderness" (325), land which always lies beyond the point of view of subjective presence, such a landscape is more often represented through Big Bear's contrasting of a time when his people "once were great and rode wherever their eyes touched land" (350), and a new order of 'written' land. This is land written *on*, as evoked in imagery of lines and angles suggesting 'lifeless' geometric abstraction,



but conveying the 'lifelessness' precisely through the use of anthropomorphising imagery which characterises as 'dead' something that has never been 'alive'. However, what is evoked is Big Bear's cultural view of nature and the land, in which any presence on the land can only be understood in terms of it having been a living part of the land:

He saw then that straight lines had squared up the land at right angles, broad lines of stark bleached bones had been spread straight, pressed and flattened into the earth for him to ride over, and sliced into the hills as if that broad thong of bone could knuckle them down, those immovable hills. Wherever he looked the world was slit open with unending lines, squares, rectangles, of bone and between the strange trees gleamed straight lines of, he comprehended it suddenly, white buildings. Square inedible mushrooms burst up under poplars overnight; but square. (409)

As colonisation spreads, the land is written *across*, the lines dividing the land serving to unite the white settlements in communication, with "Surveyors sticking poles with wires and government agents sending messages and missionaries talking talking to stop stop stop" (101). The forward movement of this passage echoes the progress of colonisation across the land, while the staccato repetition of "talking" and "stop" simultaneously evokes the relentless imposition of the missionaries' message of Christian prohibitions and the mechanical communication by telegraph. Writing thus effected cultural and geographical boundaries, defining an 'inside' and an 'outside', and defining as a result, the Indian place on the land:

Big Bear: 'I have always lived on the Earth with my people, I have always moved as far as I wished to see. We take what the earth gives us when we need anything, and we leave the rest for those who follow us. What can it mean that I and my family will have a 'reserve of one square mile'? What is that?'

James McKay: 'Since you are a chief and have a large family, you will receive land in proportion. All your band can receive land in one place'. (29)

Pivotal to the novel's representation of the colonisation of the land is the writing of the land into treaties, whose dual function is the writing *in* of the whites and the writing *out* of the Indians. At the opening of the novel, we read the reflections of Governor Morris as he recognises the full meaning and power of Sweetgrass's and Seenum's signing of the treaty:

Once he would have thought that those twenty-seven His X Marks under Sweetgrass and James Seenum made little difference, but no longer. Not after the several hundred thousand square miles to which he had finally and forever extinguished, as the Prime Minister liked to say it, all native rights. (9)

Indeed the white relationship to the land and landscape is characterised as writing on the one hand in the epistemological need attributed to them to write/right it into meaning -- to confer propriety by way of property (rights) -- such that, "it can drive a small man to madness, this incomprehensible unending at any point seemly unresisting and unchecked space. To control, to humanize, to structure and package such a continent under two steel lines would bring any engineer headier joy than the lyric prospects of heaven" (114). The imagery and implications of commodification as a colonising relation to the land are clear here, and similar imagery will be shown to be used to characterise such discourse in discussion of Patricia Grace's *Potiki*.<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, the white relationship to the landscape is 'writing' in the sense that from the Indian point of view, one consistently associated with 'nature', whites themselves are representative of the characterlessness or lifelessness of writing, shown when Big Bear sees "the tiny straight lines of police who all looked exactly alike as a bird would see, a hawk soaring," while by contrast the Indian women and children appear "like a variegated lake folded over the hills" (189). Not only are the whites seen as 'writing', but the difference is emphasised in that the point of view adopted by Big Bear is the *natural* one of a soaring hawk. The description of the police foreshadows an episode towards the end of the novel, when Kitty McLean, a young white girl differentiated from almost all other whites in the novel by her closeness to and understanding of Big Bear, is sitting in the courtroom at Big Bear's trial: "the black sleeve of Mr Richardson's arm was moving a pen across more paper. . . she couldn't read a word, more words slurred goose tracks over white paper" (383). The illegibility of the writing, and the association of her point of view with that of Big Bear are inter-dependent.

Another opposition characterising the respective relationships to the land of the Indian and the white people is that of life and lifelessness, or life and death. The novel represents the Indian world view as one in which the land is alive through Wiebe's use of personifying imagery to 'embody' the landscape, attributed to the Indian point of view. Indeed, there is a sensuality evoked in the relationship between them, emphasised

by the prevalence of female imagery for the land: "The two men lay spreadeagled against the ground and looked into a slight breath of air, down across a hollow that opened wide towards the west as if once scrapped by some giant, hard river. The lips of its banks curved to level away north and south" (124). Clouds have "rounded bellies" (134), or combine into "one sagging belly" (331). Features of the landscape include the land's "black shoulders" (155), 'the naked river,' and "a nipple of the south hills" (162). Natural elements are even given points of view, such that Big Bear wonders "How often . . . had Sun had to look down upon what they saw that summer?" (134), and an ethical subjectivity, evoked in the suggestion of its betrayal, when "There was no accusation in [Big Bear's] tone but the chiefs were staring above him into nothing, as if they could not face the ground" (197).<sup>97</sup>

This attribution is consistent with the many images that conversely represent the Indians as part of the land(scape). However, this perception is shared by both whites and the Indians themselves. To the Governor, 'the Indians circled before him seemed not so much human as innumerable mounds the earth had thrust up since morning' (17, see also 141), but Big Bear also sees his family as "mounds in the dark lodge" (217), and the "chiefs and councillors of the one thousand six hundred and seventy-eight Indians" as "like motionless rocks" (205). The most important to this point, and probably the most well-known passage in the novel, is the description of Big Bear's returning to the earth -- the sand hills -- on death:

He felt the granular sand joined by snow running together, against and over him in delicate streams. It sifted over the crevices of his lips and eyes, between the folds of his face and hair and hands, legs; gradually rounded him over until there was a tiny mound on the sand hill almost imperceptible on the level horizon. Slowly, slowly, all changed continually into indistinguishable, as it seemed, and everlasting, unchanging rock. (415)

Although Wiebe presents the identification of the Indians with the land from an Indian and a white point of view, in each case the implications are quite different. For the Indians, it represents a view of the interconnectedness of all living things in nature; for the whites, it represents the location of the Indians in a state of nature before -- and requiring -- the supplement of culture. Indeed, as the passage from the Governor's point of view illustrates, the Indians are associated with the land in a gesture of

*de*-humanisation, which is quite different from linking the human and the land. Thus they are colonised along with, as part of, the land. The implications of this rationale are referred to by Wiebe in an essay, "Bear Spirit in a Strange Land [All that's Left of Big Bear]": "White men are very resourceful; once they have forced you to give up the land, there is not much they cannot legally arrange to do with you, one way or another."<sup>98</sup>

The sinister tone of this statement is conveyed in *Big Bear* through imagery of land-murder, associated with the Indian perception of the impact of white colonisation. A principal agent of this murder is the railroad that "strangles the land" (204), always imaged from the Indian point of view, not outside of, but as an evil perversion of, nature. Miserable Man, watching a train, ponders that "sometimes it shuddered horribly, as if it would tear itself to pieces snorting black smoke in the air, shrieking as it scraped itself over the steel. There seemed to be some burning devil in it" (137). Later, Big Bear tells his people of "the Iron Horse on its track, choking the Earth, throwing sparks to set the prairie burning and it of course has no concern since it can outrun any fire" (202). There is no suggestion that it has no concern because it has no subjectivity. The perversion of nature is constantly linked to the associations of lifelessness or actual death in the artificial constructions of the whites. The train is a perversion because it is an *Iron Horse*. Similarly, the impermanence and insubstantiality of paper is contrasted with the permanence of the land. Big Bear's observation that "Land was not like paper; wind did not blow it away nor water rot it" (72) underlies his view of the unreliability of the treaty, the "promises in it that I can't find between my fingers" (202). Piapot similarly casts aspersion on the permanence or reliability of the treaty, pointing out that "The treaty is paper . . . . Paper burns in any fire" (148-9).

An important symbol of the association of white technology and death to the Indian way of life is the scaffold, which constitutes a line of imagery used throughout the novel. It suggests the constructions (in both senses) placed on the land in the building of white settlements. Linking the senses of the physical constructions and mental constructs placed on the landscape by colonisation, is the view that "Between this stone and the fading shore rose stubby blackish and purple columns, sheathed in changing grey on their inner curves, interlaced bars and beams like an immense neglected scaffold hurled over the water" (329). Similarly, in *Big*

Bear's mind, the sight of the train constructed a vision such that "those memories scaffolded together something he could not lose even in the astonished laughter of his women (131). However, the scaffold represents death in a more obvious way, one which is represented as both a 'real' threat to Big Bear's own life -- when he stands trial, on pain of hanging, for treason -- and in a figurative way, though not understood as such by the white authorities, as the death of a whole way of life. Big Bear's "scaffolded" memories generated by the sight of the train are referred to in the text immediately after he has admitted, "I may have fallen asleep, though I wish I hadn't. I didn't feel a rope" (131). And early in the novel he has told of his apprehensions for his people and their way of life in terms of his own neck: "There is something that I dread. To feel the rope around my neck" (25).

However, the oppositions of nature and life, speech and presence, to culture and death, writing and absence which appear to pervade the text's critique of white colonisation of the land, are at many points and in many important ways unsustainable as the basis of post-colonial representation of that history. For example, the passage describing Big Bear's last buffalo hunt demonstrates that death is part of nature, part of life. Big Bear is concerned for the well-being of the herd: "'Poor *mus-toos-wuk*,' said Big Bear. 'Just sixteen. . . . One calf. The cows are barren, there's something with them. And when do they feed together so quietly in summer, no bull sniffing around or bellowing?'" (124-5). Yet, he believes in the necessity for, and enjoys, the hunt. He prays (in a manner suggestive of an earlier Christian missionary presence):

'Our Father, The Main One, I have to name you first. All things belong to you. Look on our hunting. . . . Forgive us for being hungry, I thank you that you have let us see food again. I ask you for a good running, that we can kill all the eleven cows and the four bulls and the calf also which I think is female. I cannot ask more now because it is time to hunt'. (126-7)

Once the hunt is underway, he is caught up in "the total consuming unconscious joy of the one more run merging with *mus-toos-wuk* given once more to the River People" (127), and at its conclusion, he prays: "asking forgiveness of the Great Buffalo Spirit, thanking for what had been given, for the tongue, for the blood, for fat and bone and meat and hide, for sinews and the hollow cups of her hooves. In the circle of sun and sky and earth and death he stood complete" (129). The irony of Big Bear's

acceptance of the circle of life and death in a discursive context in which the Indians are located on the pole of life and the whites on the pole of death is increased when one notes Wiebe's own admission of his difficulties in writing the passage: "I have never killed an animal in my life. So I have to recreate Big Bear's last buffalo hunt as a man who truly loved it. A lot of that stuff is totally inimical to my own way of looking at the world."<sup>99</sup>

It is also apparent that the nature-culture opposition does not unproblematically characterise the Indian and white worlds. A key aspect of white culture's relationship to the land has been shown to be the mediation of writing, opposed to the freedom of the Indian from such constraining textuality. However, Wiebe includes descriptions of the Indians 'reading', or attempting in the context of colonisation's erasures, to read the land, a gesture which implies its prior status as text, and an Indian *point of view* in relation to it which confers upon it the *cultural* differentiations of landscape: "Kingbird's tracks were sifted over in the time it took to study the land" (81). They also write on the land, exemplified when the excited Kingbird "stooped and drew lines on the dust" showing barricades "'each side, here and here. . . . Here's the slough and the willows here and the little ravine comes at it here. . . .'" (179). Similarly, the Indian gaze on the landscape 'writes' it through metaphor, into spatial plays of meaning. Big Bear prescribes a necessary response to the dangers posed by colonisation in terms of an analogy to a familiar occurrence on the land: "'Who stirs in his sleep when a single buffalo runs? But when a herd moves, ahhh -- we too must shake the ground, we must speak with one thundering voice'" (203). Similarly, the imagery of perverse but animate creatures attributed to the Indians' perception of the railroad is not simply a 'innocent' failure of cognition. There is a passage in which such terminology forms the basis of some self-conscious and ribald mirth among the young men with Big Bear:

the head of the worm had already crawled behind a shoulder of the land to the west.

'I shot it in the penis,' Kingbird was saying.

...

... 'That slippery thing near the ground going in and out, just like a man doing it'.

'Yeh, I saw that, but there wasn't any -- ' Miserable Man's big face turned slackly from one to the other, 'To itself?'

Big Bear said quickly, 'The bullet didn't stop it.' Everyone craned about to stare as if they had not remembered him. 'Whiteskins can do anything, even to themselves.'

Miserable Man clutched himself, almost fell from his horse in his howling laughter. The endless ribald variations that they flung at each other riding lasted all the way back. (136)

Such humour is dependent upon the play of language and meaning, evidence of a cultural order of the appropriate and the inappropriate, and the 'writing' which allows the suppressed latter, in its suppressed status, to be provisionally privileged. In other words, the land and its inhabitants are not undifferentiated to the Indian eye in a way suggestive of the 'pre-cultural'. Indeed, it is a white, Edgar Dewdney, who writes of experiencing it in such terms. Instead, nature is ordered and differentiated into systems of cultural value. Not all nature is equal, or equally valued. For example, Big Bear notices "the trees that grew in short clusters everywhere. They hadn't been there when he hunted buffalo and now the wind used them to wait behind and gather itself and slam him with steel doors" (405). The malevolent and alien character of these trees is further underlined by the earlier vision of "whites crowded like tall black trees around him" (354). Thus, whites are associated with (unwelcome) nature, from the point of view of cultural practices of relating to and moving across the land, purposes to which this alien 'nature' is a barrier. Even Kitty McLean's description of the translation of Big Bear's words compared with the quality of his voice as "wind rubbing willow branches of a winter night" compared with "sun. . . all golden" (278), further underlines both the negative associations of trees, and the cultural hierarchisation of nature according to principles of value and appropriateness, or belonging.

Therefore, colonisation did not bring writing to an unwritten, that is, empty and meaningless land. However, although Keith is correct in his observation that

For Wiebe . . . the prairie unrest that came to a head at Frog Lake and Batoche is not so much a struggle for power between two opposed forces or even a moral conflict between right and wrong, justice and injustice. More fundamentally, it is a tragic (because unavoidable) clash between two irreconcilable ways of looking at human beings and their environment,<sup>100</sup>

he does oversimplify when he differentiates them as, "Stated bluntly. . . [that] the white viewpoint was primarily commercial and economic . . .

while that of the Indians was fundamentally religious."<sup>101</sup> To place these terms in opposition betrays the very moral and spiritual crisis of post-colonialism underlying a text which clearly privileges the Indian moral claim. It elides the Indian economic relationship to the land as the source of shelter and sustenance, bound up as this is in spiritually informed systems of exchange and value -- prayers of forgiveness and thanks in exchange for the right to kill and eat. Both Indians and whites take from the land in order to live and eat. The difference lies more accurately in the imposition of capitalism as the system which transformed relationships to the land, including its in-built requirement to erase the Indians in the establishment of white property relations and a profit-centred economy, as compared with the Indian system of taking "what the earth gives us when we need anything, and . . . leav[ing] the rest for those who follow us" (29).

The post-colonial desire to re-privilege the Indian relationship to the land as spiritual, and based on a non-exploitative, subsistence-ethic, embroils the post-colonial writer in numerous paradoxes. The Indian relationship to the land is held to be characterised by qualities which require and determine a relationship of presence to the land as opposed to the mediations and alienations of capitalism: workers from their labour and its productivity, the consumer from the source and process of production, and the Indian from the land. The insistence on the qualities of 'presence' that define Big Bear's place on the land privileges as "more enduring," and "all that is essential and permanent in his world,"<sup>102</sup> the very values which have indeed passed away and been erased from the land. It is their very absence which generates the representation of their presence, conferring them, in representation, with a further absence -- that of textuality. At the end of Big Bear's trial there is a conflation of originating absences -- absences at the origin -- which profoundly problematise Big Bear's authenticity. His request that "'the court . . . print my words and scatter them among White People. That is my defence'" (400) reverses the status of print from an instrument of his prosecution to that of his defence; its ability to be scattered, and to lose truth and meaning in proportion to its distance from the source, is revalorised as its ability to cover the land in truth; and yet the apparent failure of his request to be honoured -- for the text to be produced -- sets in place the absence of that very request so that Wiebe must invent it, and (re)place Big Bear's request within it. Indeed, the absence is the very space which Wiebe's novel fills,



once more effecting the textual erasure of the Indian and the privilege of the text.

*My Place*<sup>103</sup> is another text which constitutes a critique of colonisation and its impact on the land and human relationships to the land. However, unlike *The Temptations of Big Bear*, this is not explicitly represented as a critique of writing; nevertheless, writing pervades the terms of critique, and the construction of an Aboriginal contestatory subjectivity. The text produces an account of the hybridisation, or intertextuality, of post-colonial Aboriginal identity, and by implication, relationship to the land.

Another difference from *The Temptations of Big Bear* is that the present of the text's narrative is the post-colonial 1980s, a difference with many implications for the critique of colonisation. It enables a standpoint of Aboriginal survival, adaptation and recuperation not suggested in the depiction by Wiebe of the disappearance of a culture, reinforced by the fact that it is by someone not of that culture. However, it further enables an analysis of colonisation as still happening, as opposed to an era that is contained in, and ended at the latest point of, the period retrospectively named 'colonialism' by white history. Admittedly, *The Temptations of Big Bear* is set after Confederation, and thus associates the unification of Canada into a 'nation' -- or Nation, as it is informed by imperial culture -- with the colonisation of the land; on the other hand, the greater strength and mythologisation of Australian nationalism provides an even stronger counterpoint between the 'heroic' discourse of that mythology and its 'progressive' notion of history, and the analysis of the perpetuation of colonialism as the order of Aboriginal placement on the land. In other words, the Aboriginal relation to 'post-colonialism' means something very different from that of the post-colonisers. From the indigenous point of view, historical progress from colonialism to nationalism to post-colonialism has largely meant the continuation -- albeit in different ways -- of colonisation, profoundly problematising linear notions of historical progress. However, this is a post-colonial problematisation: it is the product of Aboriginal discourse as political analysis in a cultural context which provides, in fact is defined by, a space for that discourse where it did not exist in 'colonial' and 'nationalist' contexts. Further, as will be shown, the Aboriginal discourse itself is *post-colonial*.

It is from this standpoint that the Aboriginal relationship to the land in 'colonial-nationalist' days is reconstructed by the characters in *My Place*. Daisy reminisces, "I been a hard worker all my life. When I was little, I picked the grubs off the caulies and the cabbages at the back of the garden. I got a boiled sweet for that. Now the blackfellas weren't allowed to pick any vegetables from the garden. You got a whipping if you were caught" (329). Sally, having "read up on" Aborigines in a history library, tells her mother:

'You know, the pastoral industry was built on the backs of slave labour. Aboriginal people were forced to work, if they didn't, the station owners called the police in. I always thought Australia was different to America, Mum, but we had slavery here, too. The people might not have been sold on the blocks like the American Negroes were, but they were owned, just the same.' (151)

It is from Arthur's story that personal memories of the place of the Aborigine in the pastoral industry are added to this analysis. His account focuses on the contradiction between the extent of Aboriginal labour and the white accrual of wealth and profits from that labour. His 'odyssey' of exploitative employment culminates in this description of heroic perseverance 'rewarded' with financial reticence. The impact, and many important aspects of the description, are only conveyed with lengthy citation:

The year was 1916, it was the middle of winter and there was a flood on. After a while, [Hancock] said, 'Marble, you clear that forty acres of land I been wantin' cleared and I'll give you twelve pounds, no more, no less!'

Now he'd tried to get all sorts of people to clear that land. Nobody could do it. It was covered with big logs and stumps, and with the flood on, it was worth more like one hundred pounds, not twelve pounds! Trouble was, I knew he had me, and he knew, too. Where could I go, I had no money, no home. . . .

I don't think he believed I'd clear the land. He thought he'd have me there three more years, doing his work for him, building his house. He didn't know me. I worked from three hours before sunrise to sunset, clearing and burning. During that time the flood got worse and the railway line was nearly washed away. Every day, I was soaking wet. My feet were blocks of ice. . . . I wasn't going to give up, it was my only way out. The job took me three weeks. I cleared the land by myself when no other man would, or could.

I showed Hancock the land, then I asked him for my money. . . . He didn't give me the money right away, but he kept me waiting, waiting, hoping I'd forget about it. He knew I'd leave as soon as he gave me the money. I kept asking him for my pay. In the end, he went to Perth and got the money from the bank. Then, he took out

fifteen shillings a week board for the three weeks it had taken me to clear the land. (197)

Arthur's narrative positions him ambivalently in relation to the racially overdetermined capitalism he describes. As a 'worker' he is already inevitably a participant in industrialised agriculture. His resistance is not presented here in terms of his own attempts to reinstitute for himself a traditional relationship to the land based on an Aboriginal land ethic. Instead, he counters Hancock's evaluation of the value of his labour with his own, but recognises that it is an 'employers' market', and attempts to 'cut his losses' by working so hard that the inadequate pay for the work is earned in a shorter than expected period of time. Ultimately, however, Hancock the employer determines whether, when and how much payment is made, and in a gesture typical of a centralised, mediated capitalist economy, deducts living expenses.

Arthur's critique focuses on ethical questions of honesty and 'humanitarianism', and he makes frequent references to his own prowess and his uniqueness in the ability to do the work. This uniqueness is a telling foreshadowing of his unusual position as eventual owner of land, suggestive of the ideology more common to oppressive groups in response to claims of systematic oppression and hardship, that individual hard work is the requirement for economic and social success. Admittedly, Arthur's Aboriginality remains the principal factor complicating his endeavour. He recalls that "When I should have had sheep, they wouldn't give me any because my colour wasn't right" (207). Nevertheless, he remains a selective participant in textually-mediated land relations. He recalls a devastating hailstorm, and reflects, "I think God must have been looking after me. Something told me to get insured that year. I had never been insured before" (199). Yet even as a land owner, he balances his place, in relation to the land, between worker and employer: "I was on my own, a black man with no one to help him. I done all the fencing myself, bought everything, the dam, too. Paid money to men to clear the land. I chopped all the fence posts, dug out the holes and, when there was nothing else to do, helped clear the land" (207). However, despite his gratitude for the availability of insurance, he rejects the bank's mediation of his place on the land: "I made sure I owed no one. I didn't want no mortgage. You mortgage a place and you're beat. They've got you then, just over a lousy little bit of money" (207). This concern is as

reminiscent of the insecurities of white land owners in a Depression as it is of Aboriginal rejection of white institutional mediation. However, even the sale of his land is presented as an example of financial exploitation and deception:

We sold the farm bare for four thousand pounds. He told me he wanted to rent it for so many years till he got his money together. So he gave me four hundred pounds the first year, and said he couldn't give me any more till he'd made some more money out of my farm so he could pay for it. There was no stipulation in our agreement that my horses and machinery went with the land, but soon I found out he was takin' my horses and machinery and workin' his other farms with them as well as mine.

. . . . [T]he following year, The Depression hit and he said he couldn't go through with the sale. (208)

With the Depression, Arthur is once again required to work for other men in order to supplement his own land's poor return. Again, despite the fact that he would "do anything to make a few bob," he reflects that "By gee, some men were mean, then, they'd pinch my roots and my charcoal. I was doin' the work and they was gettin' the profits" (208).

The term 'odyssey' to describe Arthur's account of his experiences was chosen to evoke the literary construction and inter-textuality of that account. Arthur's already mentioned self-declared prowess places him within a narrative tradition he himself invokes, and within which he places himself: "In three years, I was head stockman and mustering cattle all over the district. It was pioneer days then" (191). Having referred to "pioneer days," he calls upon his participation in the pioneer era, and the heroism popularly associated with it, to propose his due of respect and fair treatment. Describing the mortgagee sale of his land and stock, he adds, "Can you tell me that was fair, for all my pioneering days, to be treated like that?" (209). When he later refers to the ethic mythologised as the basis of relations between men deriving from this time, his inter-textual reading of his place on the land is most evident. When one of his white neighbours, objecting to his presence as a 'blackfella', attempts to conspire with another man to have him driven from his land, Arthur explains, "You see, he thought he was going to turn this man against me, but this man was my friend. I'd helped him when things went wrong. . . . He was my mate" (209-10).

The Bible is another important element in this inter-textuality. Paradoxically, considering its function in the European colonisation of most settler societies, it is used by Arthur to critique colonisation more than it is perceived as an agent of it. Arthur confers upon God the status of "the best mate a man could have" (213). He then explicitly turns the message of the Bible against those who brought it, asserting the priority of the message over the messenger: "Take the white people in Australia, they brought the religion here with them and the Commandment, 'Thou Shalt Not Steal', and yet they stole this country. They took it from the innocent. You see, they twisted the religion. That's not the way it's supposed to be" (213). It is a significant aspect of the complexities of the post-colonial context of discursive appropriation and hybridity, that the appropriator/copy should posit its own more authentic status than the 'original'.

White appropriation of the land effected the displacement of Aboriginals in the very authority over, and determination of, their social and geographical place. Social displacement is fundamentally connected to the fracturing of both their belonging to, and their freedom to traverse the land. When she visits Alice Drake-Brockman, wife of the owner of Corunna Downs station on which her grandmother and mother were born, Sally learns of the 'colonial' social ethos of the early twentieth century, and its implications for Aboriginal people:

In talking to Alice, it dawned on me how different Australian society must have been in those days. There would have been a strong English tradition amongst the upper classes, I could understand the effects these attitudes could have had on someone like Nan. She must have felt terribly out of place. At the same time, I was aware that it would be unfair of me to judge Alice's attitudes from my standpoint in the nineteen eighties. (170)

The ironic position of an indigenous person being "out of place" in the land from which she has been displaced by a social order deriving from 'out of the place', is evident here. The colonial social context is contested not so much on moral grounds as on grounds of alien inauthenticity, being strongly associated with Britain and *its* (not Australia's) class system. Further, the unwillingness to "judge" Alice is somewhat puzzling given the text's overall illustration of the survival of such attitudes into the nineteen eighties, but it constitutes an avoidance of seeing the problem as one of individual morality or guilt in favour of locating it within a social

system which constructs racist and colonialist subjectivities into which individuals are interpellated without entirely free choice.

Sally's mother also recounts, from the point of view of adult understanding, her childhood experience of separation from her mother and home, the imposition of white law determining and restricting Aboriginal movement. The failure of Daisy to visit her in hospital after an operation is later learned to be "because of the curfew, which prevented Aboriginal people travelling after dark." She explains:

Aboriginal people had to get permits to travel. . . .

Each time Mum came and saw me, she always had a bit of paper with her that said she was allowed to travel. A policeman could stop her at any time and ask to look at that paper, if she didn't have it on her, she was in big trouble. (250).

Certainly Aboriginal society is shown as having its own laws of access to, or legitimate place on, the land. Arthur refers in his account to two friends he called Aunty and Uncle, explaining, "I wasn't in my home country and I thought if other natives asked who I was, it would give me some protection" (195). Although this is clearly an account of the transgression of that law, from a post-colonisation perspective which refers to the rightful inhabitants of the land not by their name, but as 'natives',<sup>104</sup> much of the text's critique of colonisation in its historical and post-colonial forms comprises a contrasting of white (capitalist) and Aboriginal land ethics.

As Arthur puts it, for example, "You don't see the black man diggin' up the land, scarin' it. The white man got no sense" (148). However, as a function of the institutional economic and social power of the colonisers, and the long history of Aboriginal separation from the land on which their ethic was established and perpetuated, this post-colonial account of an Aboriginal land ethic is a hybrid of adaptation and tradition. This is well illustrated in the following account of Aboriginal mining given by one of the people Sally and her family meet in their journey North:

'my family, we started off most of the tin-mining in this area. We would go through and strip the country, and all that old Corunna mob would come behind and yandy off the leftovers. I think they did well out of it. We were happy for them to have whatever they found, because they were the people tribally belonging to that area. It was like an unwritten agreement between them and us. Now and then, others would try and muscle in, but we wouldn't have any of that, it belonged to that mob only. We let them come in and carry on

straight behind the bulldozers. It gave them a living. We were careful about sacred sites and burial grounds, too, not like some others I could mention. The old men knew this. Sometimes, they would walk up to us and say, 'One of our people is buried there'. So we would bulldoze around it and leave the area intact'. (225)

One important point to be drawn from this passage is the refusal to fetishise tradition, but instead to enact the possibility of a compatibility between economic and traditional and spiritual values. Secondly, this adaptation provides a standpoint of survival and strength from which to contest the white radical separation of economics and spirituality as ordained by capitalism. This ultimately serves to 'underwrite' Aboriginal counter-discourse, insuring it against charges of impracticality in the economic context of the late twentieth century. Arthur, too, is able to combine 'white' practicality and Aboriginal respect for the land and all its inhabitants. There was, on his farm at Mukinbudin, "a part of his land that he kept uncleared so the wildlife could prosper in peace" (148).

Despite the adaptations made in the interests of securing a livelihood from the land in an 'industrial' agriculture, and the eventual reality of an urban rather than a rural way of life for many Aboriginal people, the continued inheritance of a spiritual affinity with 'wildlife' is expressed. Each narrating character recounts a special affinity with the creatures of the land, water and sky. Significantly, the description tends to relate the childhood experience of that affinity first or foremost, a priority which is overdetermined. This association of childhood with a state closer to nature -- less acculturated -- has been referred to in relation to Kitty McLean in *The Temptations of Big Bear*. While this is one way of reading the text's valorisation of childhood, as a reflection of properties inherent in childhood (according to Rousseauian principles), there is also a sense in which the placement of 'nature' in each narrative logically precedes the account of historical removal from the land and the fracture of that relationship. The text contains numerous examples of the removal of Aboriginal children from their homes and parents, and adult Aboriginal insecurity and impermanence of place as a result of being denied the power to make decisions regarding movement. On another less explicit level, the contemporary prevalence of urban living for Aboriginal people contributes to the sense of a cultural 'Fall' constructed in the narrative, and in whose terms nature, childhood and innocence are implied associated antecedents. Yet each character necessarily recounts that

relationship with nature from a position outside of it -- specifically from the distance of adulthood -- and thus there is often interpolation of adult commentary, explanation or self-consciousness of the process of teaching and learning about the swamp, the bush, and their inhabitants. There is therefore emphasis placed on the transmission of cultural values between generations within a family, and even, in the frequent context of broken families, between individuals.

Gladys's account from her childhood in a Church of England children's home emphasises more than the others a solitary relationship with nature; however it is presented from a standpoint of adult evaluation and knowledge: "We'd come across all sorts of snakes, green ones, brown, black. We used to pick the green ones up and flick them. I wouldn't pick them up now"(248). Arthur's language also expresses pleasure in the natural environment of his childhood, but even more clearly than Gladys's, positions it as a state of harmony from the standpoint of disruption through which that harmony could be known. However, it is not simply adulthood which is the source of knowledge, but the legacy of colonisation's changes to the land: "There were no insecticides then to kill the birds. That's why the blackfellas want their own land, with no white man messin' about destroyin' it" (181). Arthur's reminiscence highlights the natural world as a source of information about weather and the land's prosperity, raising the question of how such messages are 'read' -- in other words, the status of the land as 'text' for even traditional Aboriginal society. Daisy's teaching role as the transmitter of cultural values and knowledge about the land is clear throughout the text. Indeed, Sally's first childhood memories of the natural world around her centre precisely on Daisy's teaching of knowledge, influence over values, and concern for the wildlife of garden, bush and swamp:

The early morning was Nan's favourite time of the day, when she always made some new discovery in the garden. A fat bobtail goanna, snake tracks, crickets with unusual feelers, myriads of creatures who had, for their own unique reasons, chosen our particular yard to reside in.

. . . . I'd heard the bullfrog yesterday, it was one of Nan's favourite creatures. She dug up a smaller, motley brown frog as well, and, after I inspected it, she buried it back safe in the earth. (14)

This link between Sally and her grandmother, and its placement towards the beginning of the text is, in another sense, the end-point of



Sally's narrative: it could only have been placed at the beginning from a position of hindsight, following a process of discovery which revealed Daisy's many influences over their lives.<sup>105</sup> However, given Sally's position as an almost solely urban Aboriginal whose childhood is largely spent in ignorance, not of her difference, but of her Aboriginality (her belonging), it is also a link necessary to the post-colonial positing of the survival of an Aboriginal land ethic. Sally's relationship to the land is subject to the influences of 'white' schooling, something she at various times both repudiates and accepts. Of characters in her early reading books, she recalls "I felt sorry for them. None of them lived near a swamp, and there was no mention of wild birds, snakes or goannas" (23). However, Sally's narrative increasingly suggests a disjunction between 'authoritative' sources of knowledge, and her grandmother's retention of traditional habits (see 59-60). Well into her schooling, Sally's 'centre' of normality has changed, and she values the rational discourse of school science over her grandmother's 'eccentric' methods of combating germs (see 85).

While it is shown that teaching the ability to read the land's signs is an integral part of the preservation of the Aboriginal land ethic, the text does not avoid the suggestion of special spiritual powers of communication with nature transmitted by virtue of Aboriginality. As Daisy argues, "Blackfellas know all 'bout spirits. We brought up with them. That's where the white man's stupid. He only believes what he can see. He needs to get educated. He's only livin' half a life" (344). She tells Sally:

You and David are a lot alike, Sal. . . . you both got a feel for the spiritual side of things. . . . Your mother was like that, and me, too, I s'pose. You see, you never know what's gunna get passed down. Our people was strong in the spirit. . . . You kids loved the bush, you got things passed down to you from Gladdie and me. Things that you only got 'cause we was black. (348)<sup>106</sup>

A very important discursive shift has occurred here, one that is characteristic of post-colonised discourse, and one which works ambivalently for post-colonised peoples. A narrative which has been so powerfully one of Aboriginal dislocation and dispossession, exploitation and oppression, changes focus from this explicit and implied critique by the voice of victimhood and truth of white political, moral and ethical practices -- in short from the claim 'we are oppressed by you. It is unlucky to be Aboriginal' -- to one which expounds the privileges of being

Aboriginal which are denied to the white oppressors, or 'we are lucky to be Aboriginal. You are unlucky to be white'.<sup>107</sup> This provides for the post-colonised the sense that they have, on some level deeper than the reach of the colonising culture, retained the very traditions they are struggling to revive or preserve. On the one hand, this serves as an optimistic rallying point for cultural pride, but it also posits the spiritual 'essence' of Aboriginality as somehow sealed from the effects of the colonising culture, while the Aboriginals themselves are subject to it. Further, in reversing the message of cultural privilege from the European 'bestowal' of the benefits of Christianity, literacy, and so on, to specification of the 'poverty' of white culture, Aboriginal culture is placed in a position to be (selectively) appropriated in order to supplement the "half a life" whites are living, in the very conditions which make them susceptible to and able to 'afford' such messages.

Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that the emergence of post-colonised discourses of the importance of land and their own special spiritual connection to it, have simply evolved from the standpoint of oppressed victim to spiritual heir. Just as Daisy follows her description of the spiritual privileges of Aboriginality with the deflating conclusion, "'I been treated rotten, real rotten. . . . I been treated like a beast. Just like a beast of the field. And now, here I am. . . old. Just a dirty old blackfella'" (352), each character's discourse balances both positive and contestatory positions. Having described childhood closeness to nature, each narrative also contains, and importantly, concludes with post-colonial questions of land issues. The ambiguous reality of their relationship to their cultural heritage is evoked, for example, in Sally's account of how she and her husband "became fed up with city life", and, in the manner of a (white) consumerist approach to 'lifestyle', "thought we'd try the country for a while" (146), an option which eventually proves economically unsustainable. This stands in marked contrast with Arthur's declaration that "'I'm going back to Mucka. . . . I got a yearning for that place. My own home, my land. I been away too long'" (166), a motivation more closely echoing the post-colonised re-seeking of their traditional lands. Yet even Arthur has, in his narrative, echoed white consumerist discourse -- that of tourism. He recounts that as a young man, he "just liked riding around, looking at the land and the bush. It was what you'd call my entertainment" (196).

The ambivalence of the post-colonised Aboriginal place on the land is perhaps best evoked in the two meanings of the word 'owning' as it is used throughout the text. There is the meaning of possession or property, whose force is to alienate the Aboriginal people from the land, illustrated when, having heard Sally's idea of returning to Corunna Downs, Arthur's, Daisy's and Gladys's birthplace, Gladys asks, "'What if they won't let us on the station? We don't know who owns it now, they mightn't like strangers going out there'" (216). The concern itself, and the use of the term 'strangers', illustrates the profound difference between this sense of owning, and the sense of acknowledgement of ties. While the relationship between white station owners and the Aboriginal people is described as having been one of ownership in the possessive sense, the human relationships sought by the latter in the particular context of the relationship between the white station owners and hands, and their half-Aboriginal children is that of acknowledgement. The import of such references is almost solely to the lack of such owning. However, it is a meaning which underlies the desire of Sally and her family to return to the land and people of their heritage, and as one Aboriginal woman puts it, to "'own'" them (229).

Post-colonial Land Rights discourse is inevitably enmeshed in both senses of the word 'own'. In *My Place*, this discourse illustrates the balance of political and spiritual concerns, the recognition of history's legacy, and tradition, as the stand-point of contestation. Arthur acknowledges the need for, and validity of a multi-faceted resistance, offers an analysis of political and resource inequalities which invariably disadvantage the Aboriginal, and describes remarkable and idealised harmony and co-operation between the Aboriginal and the land within traditional Aboriginal land ethics and practices (see 212). Gladys is more philosophical, and emphasises the transcendence of the spiritual over the physical, contesting the stereotypical basis of identification in 'physical features' and 'colour' as if these were natural and not produced; and over the historical, thereby positing Aboriginality as eternal and essential both to identity and to the land itself. Yet a moment of anxiety or doubt pervades even the final assertion of belonging (see 306). Finally, Daisy's ambivalence points to a recognition and disavowal of post-colonialism's very construction of possible discourses of the land. Beginning with an analysis which underlies 'land rights' discourse, she rejects that very term,

as if there were some other basis outside of that (or any) discourse for positing the Aboriginal relation to the land:

I'm wonderin' if they'll give the blackfellas land. If it's one thing I've learnt in this world it's this, you can't trust the government. They'll give the blackfellas the dirt and the mining companies'll get the gold. That's the way of it.

I don't like this word Land Rights, people are gettin' upset about it. I dunno what this word means. I've heard it on the news. (349)

Her almost life-long public disavowal of her Aboriginality has, to some extent, in forcing her out of public life to maintain freedom *from* that identification, sealed her Aboriginality from the effects of hybridity. This is emphasised by Arthur's more participatory position vis-à-vis white values, and a consequently more individualistic attitude towards his story (as the possible source of fame). Daisy, however, is closer to a traditional relationship to the land in her very rejection as incomprehensible and problematic, of the current concept of Land Rights. Nevertheless, it is unavoidably the term with discursive currency, and thus *My Place* is as much 'about' Land Rights as it is a personal quest.

Like *My Place*, Patricia Grace's *Potiki* represents a post-colonised analysis of colonisation as still occurring, in this case for the Maori people. Like *My Place*, the narrative present of *Potiki* is also in the 1980s. In Morgan's text, the very awareness of, and pride in, being Aboriginal is presented as the principal victim of the history of dislocation from land and family, and the implication of urban white cultural norms; however, the characters of *Potiki* in the novel's present still live on their ancestral land. Although there have been fractures of the connection between the people and the land, and the healing is an important part of the novel's 'quest' or journey motif, the immediate struggle is one of the preservation of their sense of who they are and the centrality of the land to their lives and identity, against the attempts of land developers to 'buy' -- or if necessary physically force -- them off their land to establish a multi-million dollar tourist recreational facility. Thus it is shown to be a struggle of broad cultural significance for the Maori people, including spiritual, historical, economic and social aspects. Inevitably, therefore, in the face of the power of Pakeha capitalism, assertions of identity as the standpoint of contestation are mixed with anxiety about identity as the object of contestation, as their hold over their land is recognised as tenuous.

It is not simply the current strength of "money and power" which threatens them. As Roimata reflects:

money and power were not a new threat. Money and power, at different times and in many different ways, had broken our tribes and our backs, and made us slaves, filled our mouths with stones, hollowed the insides of us, set us at the edge and beyond the edge, and watched our children die. (132)

Both the recognition of a history of colonisation threatening the security of their land, as well as some strength to resist it, are derived by the Tamihana family from the experiences of the Te Ope people during the First World War. The recounting of these experiences also serves in the novel as a contextualisation of the current land struggle, not against an historical era known in 'settlement' terms as 'colonial', but against a strongly nationalist era, one in which colonisation is assumed to be complete. However, it is within this historical context that the dislocation from and dispossession of the Te Ope people's land is placed. Having 'willingly' agreed to allow their land to be used for war purposes -- their participation in the war effort evidence of their interpellation into the discourse of nationalism ("the country wanted more than Te Ope's young men. They wanted the land for purposes of war" [72]) -- they later discover this was to mean the demolition of their houses, including their wharehenui [meeting house]. They are told that "the land could not be used as a landing field if it had houses on it" (72). However, no landing field eventuates, and it is found, "before the second war . . . that the land had been made into a playing field by men on relief work" (77). In the meantime, the Te Ope people have been forced from their own houses on their own land, into urban rental accommodation.

The interweaving of this background with the struggle of the novel's present demonstrates, as was somewhat differently demonstrated in *My Place*, the meaning of the dominant construction of nationalism in New Zealand as yet another face of colonisation for the 'post-colonised' Maori. The Tamihana people learn, along with those of Te Ope, about official/unofficial deception. It is suggested that the taking of the Te Ope land for a landing field was "an excuse to scatter the people, destroy their homes, and take the land" (72). They also learn about bureaucratic protective anonymity. However, strength is gained through the shared experience much later of reviving this suppressed history and contesting it

in the courts: "The land still belonged to the people just as Reuben and his family knew it did. And at last the court of enquiry showed it too" (83). Strength is also gained by the Tamihana family when the support they offered to the people of Te Ope is returned.

The novel's treatment of the post-colonial inter-relation of land and textuality once again consists in an apparent opposition between an 'immediate' and 'authentic' indigenous relation to the land, as opposed to a mediated and abstracted or alienated post-colonising relation. The former is represented in terms of living directly on and from the produce of the land and sea, people's needs and nature's movements in harmony, conveyed in sensuous descriptions of, for example, fishing:

The water was a soft orange colour . . . and little herrings put their mouths to the water's skin making sharp circles which widened and widened on the surface of the water.

My father and brother and sister pulled the lines about over the surface of the water, and the herrings popped onto them time after time. . . .

Soon the light went off the water and then the sea was only a sound -- a soft sucking sound and a fish splash sound; (48)

descriptions of work on the land (87-88), lists of the past bountiful produce of the land, sharing the work of harvest and selling the excess (69), and finally, food preparation and eating. The preparation of the special fish caught by Toko is described in a mass of detail drawing in the senses of sight, smell, and taste:

First of all they buried the head of the fish and the insides of the fish at the roots of the passionfruit vine. Then we all went up back into the bush to get green manuka brush for the smoke fire. Hemi started the sweet-smell fire in the smoke drum and we took the eel pieces out of the brine and dabbed the wetness away from them with a cloth.

...

... The eel flesh was goldy and smelled of the sea and the trees. (52-3)

By contrast, capitalism, presented as colonisation's principal agent in late twentieth-century New Zealand, is embodied, even allegorised, in the figure of Mr Dolman, the land developer. He is renamed the "Dollarman" by silent consensus among the Tamihana people, although the implications for the people of being driven from the land into urban living include high unemployment, suggesting an equally valid rendering of his name as Mr Dole-man. In the superlative-laden discourse of land

development, Mr Dolman proposes "development, opportunity. . . . First class accommodation, top restaurants, night club, recreation centre with its own golf links -- eventually, covered parking facilities" (88). In this discourse, the sea becomes "water amenities [which] will be the best in the country and will attract people from all over the world. . . launch trips, fishing excursions, jet boating, every type of water and boating activity that is possible" (88). The creatures of the sea would be contained in "marine life areas ... your shark tanks ... / . . . 'trained whales and seals etcetera'" (88). There is the relentless suggestion, in the bustling activity and urgency of the Dollarman's discourse, the financial need to "get in and out [of the land] quickly" (91), of the imposition of Pakeha-capitalist constructions on the 'natural', unwritten landscape, where there would be "no movement or sound except for that which came from the quiet sliding, sidling of the sea" (87), and where, without the advent of "marine life areas", "The dolphins come every second summer. . . . Close enough to be believed" (92). Further, along with the packaging and commodification of "marine life," it is suggested -- in a perversion of the Maori assertion of one-ness with the land -- that their own 'culture' has a place in this scheme. But, as Toko narrates, "when a letter came telling us . . . how we could dress up and dance and sing twice a day and cook food in the ground, we wrote angrily in reply. Our singing and dancing was not for sale, we said, nor was our food cooked on stones" (97).

The capitalist gaze produces the landscape as "... a much needed amenity. . . this great potential you see, and this million-dollar view to be capitalised on" (89). But the Tamihana people point out, ironically adopting the Dollarman's discourse, that just like the "Prime amenities of land and sea and people", the "million-dollar view" in fact "Costs nothing" (92). Indeed, the Dollarman's "you see" is not simply wrong -- what he sees is not what the Tamihana family see -- it is a form of discursive colonisation in presuming to tell them that they *do*, or *should*, see the land like this. But unlike the Dollarman discourse which is centred on the urgency of the present, and a conception of progress in the future ("It's a great little spot. But maybe you have not seen its full potential" [92]), which also presumes to tell the people what they do *not* see, the Tamihana family point out that for them, "The past is the future" (94), that "what we're doing is important. To us. To us that's progress" (90). Uncle Stan tells Mr Dolman, "There's no lack of foresight, as you put

it. It's because we have foresight that we will not ever, not ever, let the land go. Take away the heart, the soul, and the body crumbles" (97).

The interwoven wholeness and one-ness of people and the land, the body and the spirit suggested in the Maori discourse contrasts with the vandalism and destruction of the land (and its inhabitants) perpetrated by Pakeha-capitalist interests. For example, when the land confiscated for "war purposes" is much later occupied by 'land protestors', the protestors make a garden "in a place which did not cause trouble to the people using the park. . . . But the garden caused a lot of anger. There were angry people. . . who called the garden destruction and wilful vandalism. But the little garden . . . was beautiful" (80-1). Instead, the vandalism is in the very destruction of this garden: "Several times the camp was attacked by angry people. A tent was torn down in the middle of the night, plants were pulled from the gardens and scattered. Rubbish was tipped at the tent openings, a bottle thrown, glass was scattered on the ground" (81). Having failed to 'buy' their way into the Tamihana land, the developers move in and try to force them off with violent tactics. These tactics are aimed at the people through the land itself. The Tamihana family wake one morning after heavy rain to find water "surrounding our houses and entering some of them, and water spread like a lake where the gardens had been. We discovered later in the morning that one side of the urupa had begun to slide away" (114). Toko realises that the sea, which had become "silted and yellow" was "the colour of broken hills" (115), and they soon found that "At the back of the land where the creek runs around the base of the hills the people found the rock and chunks of concrete and bitumen that had been piled up in the creek bed" (116).

The consistent discursive construction of oppositions between Pakeha-capitalist interests and those of Maori people raises the question of the role of textuality in understandings and discourse of the land in the novel. It has been shown that the mediating function of textuality is associated with Pakeha capitalism and contrasted with a discourse of unmediated one-ness with the land. However, the role of textuality is, in other ways, ambivalent. It is recognised as both complicit in colonisation and an important tool of resistance. The education system 'administers' conceptions of the land in the abstracted terms of 'writing', symbolic representations in lines, circles, and as the following passage shows, arbitrary available objects:



James's school stories were about the earth and the universe. The school earth was divided by lines -- latitude, longitude and equator. The people of this school earth lived in countries which were in continents, oceans and hemispheres. Some of the people in some of the school countries lived in eggshells on paper snow, some lived in matchstick villages by a paint sea crowded with dot-eyed fish. Others sat by cellophane fires with silver chocolate-wrap feathers in their hair, and others had cardboard homes behind a paper wall that could not be climbed by the sea.

It was the charted rainfall, the sun, the hurricanes, the monsoons, the typhoons and snow, and it was the cross-sections of mountains, rivers, land and soil that told people what their lives would be.

The school earth was an orange -- tilted, and squeezed top and bottom -- which took a whole day to turn, and a whole year to circumnavigate the tennis-ball sun. And it slotted into a universe which could be viewed through a peep-hole in a cardboard box, paper planets dangling from threads against navy-blue space, and light coming in through the cellophaned cutout in the box's lid. (39-40)

The unmarked passage from 'scientific' to children's 'inauthentic' representations serves to undermine the rationality or 'truth' of science's discourse of the earth and the universe. The culturally obvious symbolism of the children's representations reflects science and mapping as equally abstracted constructs.<sup>108</sup> It is as a result of writing's 'abstractions' -- alienations from the plenitude of the real -- that land is administered and access governed in terms of sections, identifying the land in terms such as "Block J136. . . J480 to 489" (89), maps planning road access for the developers (see p. 100), and even, in Pakeha hands, the ability to define centrality against marginality, so that it is argued that the Tamihana meeting house "could be shifted nearer to town, to a more central place" (100).<sup>109</sup>

The account of the Te Ope dispossession and protests made at the time illustrates the ability of 'selective' textuality -- the losing or hiding of documentation -- to suppress discourses of contestation (see 82). Indeed, the political comfort accorded the Pakeha capitalists by paper is symbolised in its use as a source of physical comfort, as at the hearing of objectors to the land development scheme, "the chambers were full of people and noise, and the suit men were fanning themselves with envelopes and papers" (98).

On the other hand, letter-writing is shown to have been an important tool of resistance, as the letters written by Rupena years before, "setting out

all that had been promised and all that had been done, and what the people wanted" (73) are eventually found, so that his grandson Reuban "began to learn the things that he wanted to learn" (76), and copies of the letters are shared so that the information could be made known, strengthening their claim in the court of enquiry. These copies of the letters are preserved, as "Roimata and Manu and [Toko] made little books with them and read them and told them over and over./And we made a big book from the newspaper cuttings that our Aunty had saved too" (78).

However, this passage alludes to an important difference posited between Maori and Pakeha textuality. There is still a positing of abstraction, alienation, or absence of authenticity in the Pakeha textual relationship to the land, while Maori land-related textuality is closer to the 'reality' of the land, and constitutes a closer, more 'authentic' relation. This can be illustrated by comparing two letters relating to the Te Ope land. In the first, the markers of 'presence' of the Te Ope people to their text and their land are underlined:

... we the people of Te Ope ask you if it was a right thing to do to take down these houses belonging to us. We think it would be right to talk of these matters first so that we can give our explanations to you and you can give your explanations to us. We write to say why have you done this? We have come to see you but you have only told us it is necessary and quickly gone away leaving us to look at each other. . .

I will tell you that the meeting-house was blessed in a Christian manner in the name of God who is above all men. . . .

... Our land will come back to us and then we must build our houses again, but our money is going away to pay our rent.

These are our thoughts and what do you reply to all of us. . . ' (76)

Markers of presence include specification of identity in relation to the land, appeals to morality, declarations of self-scrutiny and sincerity, assertions of physical approaches, direct rather than indirect phrasing of questions, and collectivity. By contrast, the letter they receive in reply is an illustration of markers of absence:

'As has already been explained the houses of which you speak were demolished because the land is required for a landing field. Since the houses of which you write were substandard I am sure you must agree that there has been no great loss to you. You must appreciate that the homes that have been allotted to you have been given at a very low rental.

I note that in your letter you have mentioned a meeting-house. There was no building on the land that could in any way fit such a description. I suggest that you keep strictly to the facts if in future you feel you need to make further representation to this office'. (77)

Absence is marked by the use of passive constructions, the authoritative singular pronoun and employment of imperatives, anonymity, and the positing of the impersonal "office" as transmitter and recipient of the letters.

It is a characteristically post-colonial paradox that the epistemology of presence which is the nature of *Potiki*'s articulation of a land-based epistemology, suppresses the *différance* of Maori discourse in its construction and function as a positivist, oppositional discourse. Indeed, not only are its own differences suppressed, but so are the differences between it and Pakeha discourse, as it is constructed in terms of what it opposes, and is thus a hybrid, symptomatic discursive image of Maori discourse, powerful and inauthentic in its very appeals to originality.

For example, those aspects of Maori relationship to the land represented as 'immediate' are mediated precisely by representation, reflections of authenticity which position them in relation to the mirror-effect of colonisation's fracture of the plenitude of immediacy. In short, they are the culturally 'written' meanings of the land. The meanings are articulated in imagery which evokes the absence of difference between the people and the land, such that "both people and wood [are] parented by earth and sky so that the tree and the people are one, people being whanau [family, related] to the tree" (177). There is also imagery which describes the land in human terms, as embodied, when "the sea gashed its forehead on the rocks" (27), and when "At the stomach of the marae we stopped" (27). Land is portrayed as vulnerable to injury, when the developers "'bled the land'" (160), and it is recognised that "The hills will be scarred for some time. . . . But the scars will heal as growth returns, because the forest is there always, coiled in the body of the land" (169). The land is conferred with a subjectivity so that on the marae, the visitors "greet you, ground that we traversed" (28), and the gifts of light and dark are things "known to the earth as well as the sky" (174).

These things known to the earth and the sky are known by the people in mythologies which comprise systems of meaning by which people live on the land. Roimata, returning to the Tamihana family land after time in

the city understands the need to return in terms of a reference to the story of Rona, the sky-dweller:

Rona was a lonely figure up there in her moon-house, holding on to her little tree and her calabashes. Had she grasped a more sturdy tree, she could perhaps have stood against the anger of the moon. . . .

'I felt as though I was floating', I said, 'As though there was nothing . . . important'.

. . . I need at least a toe-hold'. (31)

People are linked to the land by ancestry, the lines drawn from one generation to another according to culturally defined principles of lineality, and whose lines are the lines of history (see 10). Further, the presence of ancestors, buried in the land, defines that land as sacred (see 91), and subject to the mediation of cultural protocol. When the children visited the urupa, Granny Tamihana "would give them the special containers that she kept under the shed and instructions on what was allowed and what was not allowed, and instructions on what needed to be done" (121). Even the meaning of land as livelihood is mediated by a process of learning, so that as a young girl, Granny Tamihana "had learned the use of plants, and known the trees and birds that lived there, while Hemi's "apprenticeship":

his own education, had been on the land, and after his father had died Grandfather Tamihana had taught him everything to do with planting, tending, gathering, storing and marketing. He'd been taught about the weather and seasons, the moon phases and rituals to do with growing. At the same time he was made aware that he was being given knowledge on behalf of a people, and that they all trusted him with that knowledge. It wasn't only for him but for the family. (59)

Such an education clearly shapes and mediates Hemi's relationship to the land as one of knowledge, as well as placing that knowledge within a cultural system that posits a collective rather than singular subject and Hemi's own mediating status as representative.

The most direct acknowledgement of the cultural reading and writing of the land is, however, made in the discourse of post-colonial hybridity, emphasising the legacy of imposed cultural mediation, and thus not simply a textual but an inter-textual relation to land and landscape:

The land and the sea and the shores are a book . . . and we found ourselves there. They were our science and our sustenance. And

they are our own universe about which there are stories of great deeds and relationships and magic and imaginings, love and terror, heroes, heroines, villains and fools. (104)

This land is the basis of their epistemology, their source and guarantee of truth (see 160), and the recipient of their own innermost truths (see 120). This is, however, a discursive construction made possible only by the history of colonisation and fracture against which it must be defined. This is not to argue that the relationship was, before colonisation, unmediated or prediscursive; only that the original relationship is forever unknowable, barred by post-colonial inter-textual discourse. Its evocation is therefore not authentic in terms of origins, but in terms of the construction of a contestatory counter-discourse to Pakeha, capitalist neo-colonialism.

Chapter Two has considered, through discourses which thematise 'belonging' to the land, the location of land within a textual economy to which 'post-colonisers' have privileged access. I have illustrated strategies of discursive appropriation of the (discursive-subjective) place of the other, facilitating the appropriation of an 'authentic' belonging in the colonised land for the 'post-colonisers'. The chapter concludes with an exploration of fictional texts which articulate the effects, through the complicity of colonisation and textuality, of the alienation and dislocation of indigenous peoples. Chapter Three continues the thematic concern with the land and with questions of 'belonging', but does so in relation to the counter-discourses of identity and authenticity articulated from the position of the 'other', addressing both their 'appropriated' authority and their ambivalence.

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Notes.

- <sup>1</sup> Discussion of such writing is outside the scope of this thesis; however, for a selection of post-colonial reconsiderations of colonial land and landscape writing, see Dorothy Seaton, "Colonising Discourses: The Land in Australian and Western Canadian Exploration Narratives," *Australian-Canadian Studies*, 6, No. 2 (1989), pp. 3-14; Delys Bird, "Gender and Landscape: Australian Colonial Women Writers," *New Literatures Review*, No. 18 (1989), pp. 20-36; T.D. MacLulich, "Reading the Land: The Wilderness Tradition in Canadian Letters," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 20, No. 2 (1985), pp. 29-44; Barbara Belyea, "Mackenzie Meets Moodie at the Great Divide," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 23, No. 3 (1988), pp. 118-129; I.S. MacLaren, "The Aesthetic Mapping of Nature in the Second Franklin Expedition," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 20, No. 1 (1985), pp. 39-57; Michael Crozier, "The Idea of the Garden," *Meanjin*, 47, No. 3 (1988), pp. 397-412; Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1987).
- <sup>2</sup> Diana Brydon, "Landscape and Authenticity: The Development of National Literatures in Canada and Australia," *Dalhousie Review*, 61, No. 2 (1981), p. 289.
- <sup>3</sup> See Simon During, "Postmodernism or Postcolonialism?" *Landfall* 155, 39, No. 3 (1985), p. 369. During further argues that "the crisis of post-colonialism is not just a crisis for those who bore the burden of imperialism. . . . It is also a crisis for those who have been agents of colonialism and, who, once colonialism itself has lost its legitimacy, find themselves without strong ethical and ideological support" (370).
- <sup>4</sup> Gillian Whitlock, *Eight Voices of the Eighties: Stories, journalism and criticism by Australian Women Writers* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989), p. xi.
- <sup>5</sup> Susan Keogh, "Land, Landscape and *Such Is Life*," *Southerly*, 49, No. 1 (1989), pp. 54-55.
- <sup>6</sup> David Tacey, "Australia's Otherworld: Aboriginality, Landscape and the Imagination," *Meridian*, 8, No. 1 (1989), p. 60.
- <sup>7</sup> See for example Deborah Bird Rose, "Exploring an Aboriginal Land Ethic," *Meanjin*, 47, No. 3 (1988), pp. 378-387.
- <sup>8</sup> Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 39.
- <sup>9</sup> Helen Tiffin has pointed out the relationship between colonisation and textuality, describing the former as the "capture and control of cultures by the written word". She argues, "Texts constructed those worlds, 'reading' their alterity assimilatively in terms of their own cognitive codes. Explorers' journals, drama, fiction, historical accounts, 'mapping', enabled conquest and colonization and the capture and/or vilification of alterity." See Tiffin, "Post-Colonial Literatures and Counter-Discourse," *Kunapipi*, 9, No. 3 (1987), p. 22.
- <sup>10</sup> See Susan Hawthorne, "Politics of the Exotic: The Paradox of Cultural Voyeurism," *Meanjin*, 48, No. 2 (1989), p. 261 for a development of this argument.

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- 11 Ian Palmer, *Buying Back the Land: Organisational Struggle and the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1988), p. 2.
  - 12 Palmer, pp. 2-3.
  - 13 Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1987). See also Nicola Legat, "Claudia Orange and the Treaty of Waitangi Industry," *Metro*, 108, (June 1990), p. 95.
  - 14 Legat, p. 96.
  - 15 Legat, p. 99.
  - 16 See T. C. Pocklington, "Contemporary Issues Regarding Native Rights," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 22, No. 3 (1987), p. 150. This is a review of four texts concerning Canadian native land (and other) rights.
  - 17 During, "Postmodernism or Postcolonialism?" p. 370-371.
  - 18 During holds in 1987 to the view that "A country like Australia has almost no possibility of entry into the post-colonized condition, though its neighbour New Zealand, where Maoris constitute a large minority, does. New Zealand retains a language, a store of proper names, memories of a pre-colonial culture, which seductively figure identity" ("Postmodernism or post-colonialism today," *Textual Practice*, 1, No. 1 (1987), p. 45). Similarly, he has argued in a somewhat different context that New Zealand is "paradigmatic. . . because . . . it is there that the border which divides and joins the politics of enlightenment [associated with modernity and its implication in colonisation] to the politics of cultural identity [associated with the era before the modern and the discourse of the colonised peoples] is most fiercely contested". See During, "What Was the West?: Some Relations Between Modernity, Colonisation and Writing," *Sport* 4, (1990), pp. 70-71.
  - 19 Mark Williams, "Discourse More Sweet?: The Politics of Language in New Zealand and Fiji," *Meridian*, 7, No. 1 (1988), p. 24.
  - 20 Williams, p. 24. This argument recalls that of During regarding the function of language in the failure of an Australian post-colonised condition.
  - 21 See for example, Donna Awatere, *Maori Sovereignty* (Auckland: Broadsheet, 1984).
  - 22 Awatere argues that "Feminists have concentrated on the sex oppression part of it and have fixated on the fallacy that it is possible to achieve goals for women *without* also making changes to white supremacy and capitalism. . . / . . . We are *Maori* before anything" (*Maori Sovereignty*, pp.44-45). Similar points have been made from the Canadian perspective. Caroline Lachapelle states that "The majority of Indian women unite around issues affecting the lives of all native people. Thus, the native struggle is a cross-sexual struggle, with the male voice dominating." She further points out that "White women are often perceived as aspiring to be part of the power system that oppresses native people." ("Beyond Barriers: Native Women and the Women's Movement," in Maureen FitzGerald, Connie Guberman, Margie Wolfe (eds), *Still Ain't Satisfied: Canadian Feminism Today*, [Toronto: The Women's Press, 1982], pp. 260-261).
  - 23 Awatere, pp. 32; 35.
  - 24 Bill Pearson, *Fretful Sleepers and Other Essays* (Auckland: Heinemann, 1974), p. 159.

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- 25 Pearson, p. 161. In 1972, Pearson predicted that "We are likely to see a reassertion of ancestral claims, some demand for re-negotiation of the mutual rights of descendants of the occupiers and the occupied. . . . But there will not be inter-racial stability until we pakehas have recognised the unjustness of our position -- that we are living here by virtue of the violence and fraud that our ancestors practised on those whose land it was" (161). A point that underpins this chapter is that a basis of guilt and insecurity on the part of the post-colonisers is *not* likely to lead to inter-racial stability. On this, see also Jonathan Lamb, "Problems of Originality: Or, Beware of Pakeha Baring Guilts," *Landfall*, 159, 40, No. 3 (1986), pp. 352-358.
- 26 Michael Neill, "Coming Home: Teaching the Post-Colonial Novel", *Islands*, 35, 2, No. 1 (1985), p. 48.
- 27 Neill, p. 43. Neill cites Russell Haley, *On the Fault Line* (Paraparaumu: Hawk Press, 1977).
- 28 Neill, p. 43.
- 29 Tacey, p. 57.
- 30 Peter Beatson, *The Healing Tongue: Themes in Contemporary Maori Literature* (eds) Dianne and Peter Beatson, *Studies in New Zealand Art and Society* 1 (Palmerston North; Sociology Department, Massey University, 1989), p. ii.
- 31 Beatson, p. i.
- 32 Peter Simpson, "Being Pakeha in 1990: A Pilgrim's Progress," *Metro*, 108 (June 1990), p. 113.
- 33 Neill, p. 48.
- 34 Tacey, p. 58.
- 35 Beatson, p. i.
- 36 Beatson, p. iii.
- 37 Michael King, *Being Pakeha* (Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), p. 19
- 38 Beatson, p. ii.
- 39 Beatson, p. i.
- 40 Neill, p. 42.
- 41 Neill, p. 39.
- 42 Simpson, p. 111.
- 43 Simpson, p. 113.
- 44 Simpson, p. 113.
- 45 King, p. 54.



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46 King, p. 19.

47 King, p. 19.

48 Tacey, p. 58.

49 Tacey, p. 58.

50 Simpson, p. 112.

51 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (trans.) Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), pp. 59-60. The full implications of the 'confessional' discourse in the post-colonial context will be elaborated in Chapters Four and Five of this thesis.

52 Chapter Four will include more discussion of the implications of such terms as 'sincerity' and 'intention'.

53 Norris, p. 31.

54 Norris, p. 28.

55 Norris, p. 51. It is this which could be argued to locate deconstruction as post-structuralist rather than structuralist, and perhaps even casts textuality as somewhat analogous to the workings of the unconscious in post-structuralist psychoanalysis as utilised in the last chapter.

56 Awatere, p. 10; Bruce McGuiness and Denis Walker, "The Politics of Aboriginal Literature", in Jack Davis and Bob Hodge (eds), *Aboriginal Writing Today: Papers from the First National Conference of Aboriginal Writers Held in Perth, Western Australia, 1983* (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1985), pp. 45; 49.

57 For a fuller discussion of this point and its implications, see Ruth Brown, "Maori Spirituality as Pakeha Construct," *Meanjin*, 48, No. 2 (1989), 252-8, where she points out that "Twentieth century Western culture . . . takes the capitalist social order as given and immutable, then searches for an 'other' that stays spiritually 'whole' by staying outside of capitalist management" (253), and that "This act of cultural ventriloquism projects 'spirituality' onto the Maori and leaves everyday 'non-spiritual' Western entrepreneurial practices unimpaired" (254).

58 Sue Thomas points out that "the mystical identification of Aboriginality with the land - the keystone of current demands for land rights -- is a version of the essentialist metonymy one often finds in the use of Aborigines as symbols", "Connections: Recent Criticism of Aboriginal Writing," *Meridian*, 8, No. 1 (1989), p. 41.

59 C.K. Stead's position is exemplary in this regard. See Stead, "Keri Hulme's *The Bone People*, and the Pegasus Award for Maori Literature," *Ariel*, 16, No. 4 (1985), pp. 101-08; Stead "Pakeha Provincialism, Maori Small-mindedness," *TLS*, December 28 1990-January 3, 1991, p. 1398; and the chapter entitled "C.K. Stead's Adversary Stance" in Mark Williams *Leaving the Highway: Six Contemporary New Zealand Novelists* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1990).

60 See for example, Jennifer Ellison, *Rooms of Their Own* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1986); Candida Baker, *Yacker: Australian Writers Talk About Their Work* (Sydney: Picador, Pan Books, 1986); Paul Kavanagh, "The Self the Honey of All Beings: A Conversation with Elizabeth Jolley," in *Southerly*, 49, No. 3 (1989), pp. 438-451; and "Elizabeth Jolley,"

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Interviewed by David Headon in *Meanjin*, 44, No. 1 (1985). Also Gillian Whitlock, *Eight Voices of the Eighties*, contains a selection of pieces by and about Jolley, while autobiographical pieces include "Self-Portrait: A Child Went Forth" in *Stories*, (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1984), p. 299-308.

61 Elizabeth Jolley, *The Newspaper of Claremont Street*. (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1981. Rpt. 1988).

62 Elizabeth Jolley, "The Last Crop", in *Woman in a Lampshade* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), p. 208-229.

63 Elizabeth Jolley, "A Gentleman's Agreement" in *Stories*, p. 18-24.

64 Elizabeth Jolley, *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1983. Rpt. 1984).

65 Elizabeth Jolley, *Mr Scobie's Riddle* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1983).

66 Elizabeth Jolley, *My Father's Moon* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1989).

67 Elizabeth Jolley, *Cabin Fever* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1990).

68 Elizabeth Jolley, *Foxybaby* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1985).

69 Elizabeth Jolley, "The Long Distance Lecture," in *Stories*, pp. 176-189.

70 Elizabeth Jolley, "Woman in a Lampshade", in *Woman in a Lampshade* (1983; Rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 137-149.

71 Elizabeth Jolley, *Palomino* (1980; Rpt. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984, 1985).

72 Elizabeth Jolley, *Milk and Honey* (1984; New York: Persea Books, 1986).

73 Elizabeth Alley, "Dwelling in the Novel", Interview with Elizabeth Jolley, Radio New Zealand, May 10, 1988.

74 Elizabeth Jolley, *The Well* (1986; Rpt. Ringwood: Penguin, 1987).

75 W.J. Keith, *Epic Fiction: The Art of Rudy Wiebe* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1981), p. 63.

76 Margaret Reimer and Sue Steiner, "Translating Life into Art: A Conversation with Rudy Wiebe" in W. J. Keith (ed), *A Voice in the Land: Essays By and About Rudy Wiebe* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1981), p. 128.

77 Keith, *Epic Fiction*, p. 63.

78 Keith, *Epic Fiction*, p. 2.

79 Keith, *Epic Fiction*, p. 3.

80 Rudy Wiebe, *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1973; Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, New Canadian Library Edition, 1984).

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- 81 Wiebe, "On the Trail of Big Bear" in Keith (ed.), *Essays*, p. 140; emphasis mine.
- 82 Wiebe, "On the Trail of Big Bear," p. 140.
- 83 Keith, *Epic Fiction*, p. 63.
- 84 Wiebe, "On the Trail of Big Bear," p. 134-5.
- 85 Keith, *Epic Fiction*, p. 1.
- 86 Wiebe, in Eli Mandel and Rudy Wiebe, "Where the Voice Comes From," in Keith (ed.), *Essays*, p. 153.
- 87 For a psychoanalytical account of the gaze as "the regulation of form, which is governed not by the subject's eye, but by his expectations, his movement, his grip, his muscular and visceral emotion -- in short his constitutive presence, directed in what is called his total intentionality", see Jacques Lacan, "Of the Gaze as *Objet Petit a*," in Jacques Alain Miller (ed.) *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (trans.) Alan Sheridan, (New York: Norton, 1978), pp. 65-119.
- 88 Wiebe, "Translating Life into Art," in Keith (ed.), *Essays*, p. 129.
- 89 Mandel, in "Where the Voice Comes From," in Keith (ed.), *Essays*, p. 151.
- 90 Keith, *Epic Fiction*, p. 3.
- 91 Mandel, in "Where the Voice Comes From," in Keith (ed.), *Essays*, p. 151.
- 92 Mandel, in "Where the Voice Comes From," in Keith (ed.), *Essays*, p. 154.
- 93 Keith, *Epic Fiction*, p. 2.
- 94 Dick Harrison, *Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1977), p. 200.
- 95 This term is borrowed from Gaile McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Langscape* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1985). She states that "The coinage 'langscape', far from adventitious, is meant to underline the extent to which nature, like other aspects of reality, is not simply perceived but socially constructed. By mythologizing our environment we convert it into a body of symbols, a kind of code which -- like all language -- reveals the ability both to reflect *and* to co-erce our experience of the world" (vii).
- 96 Patricia Grace, *Potiki* (Auckland: Penguin, 1986).
- 97 There is an echo here of the concern Wiebe expressed in relation to his research cited earlier: "Will I dare to look at it once I have, if I dare, unearthed it?"
- 98 Wiebe, "Bear Spirit in a Strange Land [All That's Left of Big Bear]," in Keith, (ed.) *Essays*, p. 145.
- 99 "Translating Life into Art," in Keith, *Essays*, p. 129.
- 100 Keith, *Epic Fiction*, p. 69.

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101 Keith, *Epic Fiction*, p. 69.

102 Harrison, p. 203.

103 Sally Morgan, *My Place* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1987).

104 The term could, however, be meant to evoke not simply 'Aboriginal', but, closer to the earlier meaning of the Maori tangata whenua, the people local to or native of that area, the host people.

105 This structuring of the narrative will be examined more fully in later discussion of the text as transcribed oral collective autobiography.

106 The element of chance suggested in Daisy's statement that "you never know what's gunna get passed down" presumably refers to Sally's racially mixed heritage, the fact that her father was white.

107 Although Sally's narrative has expressed the childhood sense of privilege in living by a swamp, and family closeness, this is not linked explicitly by her to their Aboriginality.

108 See Graham Huggan, "Decolonizing the Map: Post-Colonialism, Post-Structuralism and the Cartographic Connection," *Ariel*, 20, No. 4 (1989), p. 117, where he links cartography and colonial discourse as systems of representation: "[T]he map [is] split between its appearance as a 'coherent' controlling structure and its articulation as a series of differential analogies. . . . Yet cartographic discourse . . . is also characterised by the discrepancy between its authoritative status and its approximative function." This essay is also published in Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin (eds), *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 125-138.

109 A further aspect of the inauthenticity of textuality presented in the novel but not explicitly related to the theme of land, is the representation of school- and text-mediated Christianity, where the naivete of the child's understanding (as yet unacculturated into the concept of symbolism and representation), is used to problematise the validity of such a textual 'spirituality'. For example, Roimata's childhood understanding is recalled in the account of how "At school we were given holy pictures to help us do God's will. God's will was for us to sit still, or stand straight on two feet. It was His will that we pray, that we have clean handkerchiefs, wear aprons. . . . It was His will that we did not push or dribble, whistle, spit, swear. . . . /It was God's will that we sing the alphabet, the multiplication tables, the hymns and the catechism. . . . /The children who pleased Jesus could put a hand in the green tin for a picture or a toffee" (16).

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE POST-COLONIAL PROBLEMATISATION OF BELONGING

#### 3. I. Introduction.

In Chapter Two I addressed the complicity of textuality in effecting the 'belonging' of the (post-)colonisers through the alienation and dislocation of indigenous peoples, *and* the efficacy of textuality in mounting critiques of colonisation and land-based resistance on the part of those peoples. In Chapter Three I now consider discourses, not from that 'authoritative' subject-position 'within' the Symbolic, but located in the Imaginary terms of identity and identification with the 'others' of the dominant discourses of land ownership. Rather than imposing their identities on to the land, these 'others' seek their identity in relation to it.

However, interacting with 'post-colonised' discourses of identity and belonging, and their critiques of colonisation, are concomitant anxieties informing 'post-colonising' discourses regarding the validity and inauthenticity of belonging in relation to that historical legacy of colonisation. In the context of the 'presence' of identity invoked by the post-colonised as indigenous, the post-colonisers face an absence in the space corresponding to that post-colonised identity. This failure to constitute a convincing post-colonising 'identity' gives rise to discourses which break down the notion of such a monolithic post-colonising identity into available 'presences': 'woman' as identity, 'immigrant' as identity, 'working-class' as identity, 'lesbian' as identity, and so on. These not only correspond to 'Maori', 'Aboriginal', 'Indian' and 'Inuit' as seemingly natural truths, natural and therefore *truthful* discursive stand-points or centred subjectivities, but they have the added attractiveness of serving as victim-positions within post-colonising societies. Texts written from such subject positions therefore demonstrate alternative social victim-positions with concomitant variation in economic access to land, however seeking moral basis for such access in terms of a greater depth of identification with the land. Thus they effect a double identification with the indigene: they are isomorphic subjectivities, and they share the condition of oppression.

Another effect, or even strategy, of this identification comprises the critique of textuality as an *inauthentic* and insecure basis of relationship to

the land. Therefore, the chapter goes on to suggest the implications of this discourse of identity for the security of post-colonisers' textually-based and mediated relationship to the land.

### 3. II. Land and Identity.

The entry, into the post-colonial discursive context, of discourse from an indigenous 'post-colonised' subject position has often taken the form of texts which assert, from that position, a relationship between land and both cultural and subjective identity. This chapter places special emphasis on the post-colonised discursive link between individual/cultural identity and land. Discussion of *The Temptations of Big Bear* demonstrated the construction of cultural identity and differentiation through landscape imagery, and at the same time the identity of the land through imagery of cultural conceptions of the human. It is not possible for me to determine the degree of 'authenticity' reflected in these constructions; indeed, it is only necessary to demonstrate their status and implications as constructions. Both Patricia Grace's *Potiki* and Sally Morgan's *My Place* are further texts of post-colonised discourse which associate the human and the landscape in terms of a similar crossing over of imagery. However, each does this within the context of a particular focus for the issues of identity and textuality specific to their overall texts.

As has already been stated, assertions of identity in *Potiki* are mixed with anxieties about identity in the characters' recognition of their tenuous hold over their land in the face of capitalist development interests. The centrality of the land to the lives of the characters of *Potiki* is represented as the centred-ness of individual and collective identity. That identity is most 'centred' when characters are close to the land, and the land provides the defining terms of identity. Roimata identifies her children's characters in terms of the landscape, particularly as it was at the time of each of their births, suggesting a natural transference and a permanent bond to place: "James is like his father -- quiet and sure, and with the patience the earth has. . . . His cries caused no earth tremble or sky rumble" (15). By contrast, Tangimoana, named for the sounds of pained crying that the sea made, is "as sharp-edged as the sea rocks" (15). Adults are also identified in relation to landscape or closeness to the land. Roimata describes her husband Hemi as "rooted to the land as a tree is" (23; 175), while she is a "patient watcher of the skies" (25; 152; 174). The identification of people and land is

made both in terms of traditional knowledge passed down in oral form, such as when "Granny began to chant a waiata . . . linking the earth that we are to the sky that we are" (130),<sup>1</sup> and in terms of new narratives arising from specific understandings of the identification. In a humorous account of the children's memories of the burial of an uncle:

Manu said that Uncle Pere had been as big as a mountain. . . . Then Tangimoana remembered that there really was something about a mountain because the diggers had taken hours and hours to dig the hole. . . .

But the earth dug out from the deep hole had made a big pile, like a mountain. (121-2)

However, it is not only individual identities which are linked to the land, but also the collective identity of the people. Toko narrates, linking life and land in struggle and sharing, that "for some years we had little contact with other people as we struggled for our lives and our land", but now it was good having others there "sharing our land and our lives" (145). Collective identities are constructed in terms of the land to which the people belong, as shown in the letters which specified "we the people of Te Ope," while land is identified in terms of the people living on it, such as "the family land of the Tamihanas" (15). By contrast, in a cultural setting alienated from the land, individual and collective identity is also alienated. Reuben finds that what he learns at school is merely "that I'm not somebody, that my ancestors were rubbish and so I'm rubbish too. That's all I learn from the newspapers, that I'm nobody, or I'm bad and I belong in jail" (74). As mentioned in the previous section, it is when he becomes involved in the fight to get the Te Ope land back that Reuben's sense of himself and where he belongs is restored. Indeed, more generally, Hemi notes that instead of accepting rootless, drifting lives of urban unemployment, "people were looking to their land again. They knew that they belonged to the land, had known all along that there had to be a foothold otherwise you were dust blowing here and there and anywhere -- you were lost, gone" (61). This centring in the land and their own culture linked to it is described as necessary in a collective sense "if they didn't want to be wiped off the face of the earth," (60) emphasising the centrality of the land to the cultural survival of the Maori people.

Just as the people's return to the land is their return to themselves, the destruction of the land amounts to the destruction of the people. Following the flood of the land, and then the burning of the wharenui by

the land developers, Toko remembers that "Our bodies moved, our hands moved, doing the familiar things, but our thoughts, our spirits were in ruin, fallen to broken earth" (139). However, early in the novel, Toko's 'special insight' foreshadows these very events in terms which evoke a past as well as the present of dispossession of their lands and identity, and the need to fight to retain or regain these. Thus the inter-relation of land and identity and the threat of their mutual loss is suggested in Toko's attempt to explain the children's mysterious war games to Roimata:

'What are the wars about, Toko?' I asked.  
 'Fighting,' he said.  
 'But fighting who?'  
 'Just enemies.'  
 'And who are they? Who is the enemy?'  
 'We don't know yet, but they have stolen from us.'  
 'What have they stolen?'  
 'We don't know yet but it's something to do with our lives.'  
 'And where? What place, what country?'  
 'No place, or just wherever you are, because it's not good to have your life taken out.'  
 'Well what is it then, the life that's being stolen?'  
 'We don't know yet, but it might be something like a glowing heart of all special colours, pink, green, brown, blue, purple and silver.'  
 'And where? Is it on the moon, or out in space, in the desert, out at sea?'  
 'It's just an ordinary place. It's where you are.' (46)

The historical past of the 1860s land wars is evoked as the context for the recent past of fraudulent dispossession of the Te Ope people, and the contemporary post-colonial struggle of Maori people to regain their land. However, the land is not specifically mentioned. The object of struggle is described in terms of something intangible, even mystical, the 'spiritual' essence of one's self, and it is this -- irreducible identity -- which is reconnected to the land issue and imagery through its description as a *place*. The past of dislocation and urban living has also simultaneously fractured people from the land and from themselves. Acknowledging the destructiveness not simply of urban culture in itself, but of the loss of continuity with the land, and with the handing down of teachings about the land, the return is not one of merging again with an intact land ethic preserved in some timeless repository of cultural practices and knowledge, or an essence of Maori-ness sealed from the effects of physical and spiritual dislocation. Although they are drifting back to the land, Hemi wonders:



Could the young ones stick it out on the land, the ones there now, because some had gone already. Come, gone. When the jobs had got tight they'd come home, a lot of them. Tried to stick with it, but they were too . . . broken, to make a go of it. Had already had the stuffing taken out of them, and couldn't last it out. (149)

However, the land is also shown to heal not only its own scars with time (169), but to heal the spirits and the wholeness of the people, individually, and together. A number of characters are described as turning their feelings of loss towards the land. Roimata says that Hemi, "as rooted to the land as a tree, turns in his pain to the soil" (175), and Hemi also acknowledges, "I spend a lot of time looking at the soil but don't think I'm turning my back. It's a way of making the pain less" (176). Roimata reflects that "'In a time of solid dark . . . I went down to the shore'" (174). However, Tangimoana "wouldn't agree with driving feelings into the soil, digging over the loss and hurt" (148). Roimata notes, after the land developers' violent sabotage of the land and the lives of the Tamihana family, that "We were living under the machines, and under a changing landscape, which can change you, shift the insides of you" (151). And with a changing landscape comes adaptation to the acceptance of new as well as old ways of fighting for one's survival. Roimata describes Tangimoana's response in terms which link the response of the people to the response of the land: "She did not agree with our acceptance of a situation, which was not a deep-down acceptance, but only a waiting one. She saw the strength of a bending branch to be not in its resilience, but in its ability to spring back and strike" (152).

In *My Place*, the relationship between land and identity is played out in terms of the motif of the journey:<sup>2</sup> the journeys into each character's past which comprise the text are, in either the psychical or the physical sense, bound up with journeys back to the land. The spatial representation of time is illustrated when, having returned to Corunna, Sally remarks:

There were no Aboriginal people on Corunna now. It seemed sad, somehow. Mum and I sat down on part of the old fence and looked across to the distant horizon. We were trying to imagine what it would have been like for the people in the old days. . . . We easily imagined Nan, Arthur, Rosie, Lily and Albert, sitting exactly as we were now, looking off into the horizon at the end of the day. Dreaming, thinking. (229)

On another level, the text enacts the journey to reconstruct the self through its use of 'bildungsroman' narratives. Within these narratives, links between self and land are made, culminating in the 'attainment' of an identity along with a re-connection to the land of the family history. They amass into a collective and cultural self of 'Aboriginal' identity.

My emphasis on the literary aspect of this construction is deliberate. In accounting for the relationship to land as both a determinant and a product of the relationship to the knowledge of Aboriginal identity, intertextuality plays a significant role in defining the terms of each. Sally's pre-school and early childhood immersion in her grandmother's Aboriginal cultural assumptions is represented as something whose implications Sally neither recognises nor understands (though clearly, from the adult retrospective point of view, there is the teleological suggestion that there is something to be recognised and understood). Specifically, Sally's relationship to her Aboriginality is not one of *knowledge*: she does not *know* she is Aboriginal. Ironically, though, Sally is aware on some level of her difference, and it is through an 'alien' text that she gains a sense of her own place in White Australia: "Our teacher began reading stories about Winnie the Pooh every Wednesday. . . . In a way, discovering Pooh was my salvation. He made me feel more normal. I suppose I saw something of myself in him" (45). To add to the irony of her 'alien' identification (from without and within), it is this very identification which provides an early understanding of her 'spirituality', as she notes that "Pooh lived in a world of his own and he believed in magic, the same as me" (45), and it allows her to contextualise her own enjoyment of, and ability in, the 'traditional' practice of drawing on the earth: "[W]hile Pooh was obsessed with honey, I was obsessed with drawing. / When I could find any paper or pencils, I would fish pieces of charcoal from the fire, and tear strips off the paperbark tree in our yard. I drew in the sand, on the footpath, the road. . ." (45). Much later, in terms of the narrative structure, this drawing ability is revealed as an individual and cultural inheritance (328). Even Sally's adult reminiscence of the significance of the land to her in childhood ("The swamp behind our place had become an important place for me. It was now part of me, part of what I was as a person" [59]), is produced in terms of received children's literary tradition, emphasising the imaginative interpolation of the subject into the narrative's 'adventure':

When I was in the swamp, I lost all track of time. I wallowed in the small, muddish brown creek that meandered through on its way to join the Canning River. I caught gilgies by hanging over an old stormwater drain and wriggling my fingers in the water. As soon as the gilgies latched on, it required only a quick flick of the wrist to land them, gasping, on the bank. I imagined myself as an adventurer, always curious to know what was around the next bend, or behind the clump of taller gums that I glimpsed in the distance.

I loved to think of the swamp as a very wild place. (59)

However, following the 'discovery' of her Aboriginality, and her identification as Aboriginal, the burden of proof is placed on her to show that this was not simply a pragmatic and false appropriation for personal gain in the form of an Aboriginal scholarship.<sup>3</sup> In this context, it is precisely her inter-textual relationship to the land that causes her doubt and anxiety about the authenticity of her identity.

I turned my face to the window and stared at the passing bitumen. Had I been dishonest with myself? What did it really mean to be Aboriginal? I'd never lived off the land and been a hunter and a gatherer. I'd never participated in corroborees or heard stories of the Dreamtime. I'd lived all my life in suburbia. (141)

While Sally's Aboriginal identity is challenged by white authority (when it promises some benefit to her), for others it is problematic when it is conferred. Daisy, Arthur, and Gladys share the last name Corunna, associating them with Corunna Downs, the station to which they 'belonged', in the possessive perhaps more than the associative sense. However, although their legal identity was linked to the land, this name revealed the relationship to the land effected by colonisation rather than as a part of indigenous heritage. This is pointedly evident in the station-owner's conferral of the same name on his "big black horse" (177), associating them more with the livestock than with the idea of family. Indeed, he specifically fails to confer the name -- and acknowledge his paternity in the process -- of Drake-Brockman, which his white children received. Further, the name Corunna not only legally effaced their Aboriginal names (although these were used, unofficially, among themselves), but it was the product of another 'alien' text. Alice Drake-Brockman, wife of the station owner, explains: "'Corunna Downs was named by my husband. There is a poem, 'Corunna'. He was reading a book at the time with the natives, and it was a poem about Corunna, I think it was in Spain'" (168).

Sally's curiosity about her family's past eventually leads to the point where "We were suddenly much more aware of how little we knew. . . ./After much thought, I decided that our best course was to return to Nan and Arthur's birthplace, Corunna Downs" (214). This aspect of the journey for their 'selves' is expressed in terms of seeking knowledge, the settlement of factual gaps and contradictions. At the suggestion, Daisy's and Gladys's scepticism is expressed in terms of the pointlessness of the endeavour; specifically that, as Daisy disgustingly puts it: "'You're like your mother, you like to throw money away. All you'll be lookin' at is dirt. Dirt and scrub'" (214). This characterisation of the land and its lack of significance, however, constitutes Daisy's disavowal of her Aboriginal identity, both in the negative associations of the description, and in the refusal to acknowledge a meaning beneath that surface, relating to her own origins and identity.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, while Daisy refuses to go, Gladys relents, admitting "wistfully" -- a suggestion of some enigmatic pull -- that she has "'always had a hankering to go North'" (215). Sally's children, subjected to Daisy's stories of "giant snakes and huge crocodiles every step of the way" (217), and their own 'reading' (of books or films), comprise a new post-colonial generation approaching the journey inter-textually: "The children were convinced that going North was as adventurous as exploring deepest, darkest Africa" (217).

In a way, the 'bildungsroman' works as an 'unbildungsroman' before the 'bildung' is possible. Sally's description of the effect of the journey suggests a process of decolonising themselves, by way of a retrieval of sense of place, back to an Aboriginal identity which can then be built upon. She reflects that "What had begun as a tentative search for knowledge had grown into a spiritual and emotional pilgrimage. We had an Aboriginal consciousness now, and were proud of it" (233).

The circle of age and youth, past and future, is resealed by way of a link between land and text: "Every night [Sally's daughter] Amber read Nan a bedtime story. The stories were about Aboriginal children in the Western Desert. Nan loved to listen to them, and when Amber had finished reading, she'd tell about some of the things she'd done as a child" (318). Daisy's new-found willingness to speak, her acceptance of her Aboriginal

identity as a source of pride, signals the combined power of land and text to articulate a post-colonised, and even decolonised identity.

### 3. III. Women and the Land.

'Woman' is one of the identities of 'presence' available (differentially) to 'post-colonised' and 'post-coloniser', and in the context of *post-colonial* patriarchal social organisation, it offers as well as a real position of contestation of patriarchy itself, a victim-position of identification for the 'post-colonisers' with the 'post-colonised' on a gender axis. Some feminisms adopt what could also be seen as the patriarchal myth of women's closer relation to nature, in order to posit women as having greater empathy, even a spiritual connection with the land. At the same time there is a critique of patriarchal land ethics based on property, and a conflation of land and women in patriarchal relations of ownership. Instead, women's 'access' to land is founded on identification *with* the land.

Aritha Van Herk's *The Tent Peg*<sup>5</sup> posits at the outset the problem of women's access to the land within patriarchal society. However, this problem is not addressed as one of women's access to property rights over the land; indeed the property-relation is, as will be shown, critiqued. Rather, the problem is located primarily in the discourses which define and control the meanings of land, showing them in many ways to be identical to, or at least isomorphic with, the discourses which construct and define the meanings, or place, of women. The landscape of *The Tent Peg* is the "wilderness" of the Canadian North, the Wernecke Mountains in the Yukon, at a uranium prospecting camp.

From the beginning, J.L.'s 'place' is problematic. Because of the prevalence of assumptions about geology as "a man's field" (27), and even more so mining camps as places where "Women just don't belong" (29), assumptions she is aware of even before applying for the position of camp cook, J.L. gains initial access -- literally -- through the use of her initials only on the application form. She correctly guesses she will be presumed male (23). Secondly, taking advantage of her build, she successfully disguises herself as a young man and fools MacKenzie, the camp leader, although he finds J.L. puzzling (18). However, before the crew set out for the camp, a series of events forces J.L. to disclose her gender. Although she expects to be fired, she has already impressed MacKenzie, and while he is

humiliated at his mistake, he allows her to stay on the basis of her cooking and catering abilities. J.L.'s access to the land is therefore ambivalent. She assumes masculine privilege, and MacKenzie presumes masculine identity. However, although eventual access is gained in terms of her true gender, it is nevertheless granted by MacKenzie who could just as easily have refused it. In terms of J.L.'s (and the novel's) critique of such patriarchal power, this is one of many contradictions the novel cannot resolve, contradictions which are symptomatic of the problem of women's relation to the land under patriarchy.

Indeed, having gained physical access, J.L. is even more enmeshed in the assumptions and objections of the other men: "'You can't have a girl in camp. She won't be able to stand the isolation, she'll be nothing but trouble'. . . . 'One girl and a bunch of men? You've gone crazy'" (28). However, it is not simply expressions of explicit objection which define J.L.'s (lack of) place in the camp. Each of the principal 'characters'<sup>6</sup> is linked to a discursive pattern which defines the meaning of the land and landscape as the meaning of femininity. In positing the identity of 'woman' and land, and doing so in terms of patriarchal myths of femininity, women's relationship to the land is problematised.<sup>7</sup> For example, thinking about J.L., MacKenzie reflects that she carries "the mystery that is only there in women. Because women are so mysterious" (145), and Franklin ponders "J.L. mystery" (168). Women, like the land in the discourse of exploration, are a problem or a mystery to be solved, placing the male problem-solving consciousness at the centre of experience. To emphasise this link, the main male characters, those who are part of the mining camp, are named after explorers from Canadian history, as well as fur-traders, map-makers, and others who helped 'solve' the problem of the land that would become Canada. The one apparent exception is Jerome, who has not been traced to any historical figure. The significance of his exceptional status will be elaborated through the discussion of the novel.<sup>8</sup>

MacKenzie attributes another popular myth of femininity to the land when he describes the land from the aeroplane: "It's that kind of country, changes her mind the minute your back is turned. I like the fickleness of it; it keeps you guessing" (11). Further, such discourses of woman and the land tend to be highly dichotomised between idealisation and derogation. At the centre of this dichotomy is the male subject. The dichotomy can be

conceived, in one of its manifestations, in terms of the 'domestic ideal' and the 'wild(er)ness'. It should also be pointed out that the novel's illustration of these discursive paradigms makes little differentiation in attribution between characters regarded in simple terms as 'sympathetically' portrayed, and those whose portrayal is more clearly 'unsympathetic'. Therefore, the problem is located not with individual men as 'good' or 'bad', but with culturally dominant and pervasive discursive structures.

Milton, a young Mennonite man, exemplifies this very dichotomy of domestic ideal and wilderness in his view of women and the land. His attraction to the Yukon was as a safe place from carnal temptation: "I figured you could get closer to God up here, but He feels farther away. That girl" (63). However, having opposed the sin of the body or mind, projected on to J.L., to the feelings of purity in isolation attributed to the mountains, he finds that neither J.L., nor indeed the landscape, conform to his basically domestic ideal of safety (101). Similarly, J.L. is "not the way a girl should be. . . . / I never seen a girl like her before. She is hard and angry instead of soft and still and holding inside the way a girl should be" (82). Milton locates the problem with J.L., and with the landscape, not in his own gaze which is both literally the source of his problem -- he cannot stop looking at J.L. -- and his analysis.

MacKenzie similarly dichotomises the domestic ideal and the wilderness, however for him the land is the safe refuge, while suburban life is incomprehensible. The land is like the wife-mother of the domestic ideal, selfless, comforting, nurturing and all-absorbing. For him, "Once you're out there, in amongst the moss and the occasional outcrop you melt right down into the barrens. Not a dot of anyone anywhere. And I like it that way" (10). While the unexpected departure of his wife is discursively placed on the arbitrary and unmapped side of the wilderness, in the mountains he is "in control as surely as he seems awkward and unassuming in town" (56). MacKenzie's presence in the mountains is described in the imagery of a home-coming: "I open my jacket and stretch out my arms, let the wind bell it around me. A man could rest here, could press himself into the moss and let the mountain grow around him" (83).

Hudson places J.L. and the Yukon on the side of wilderness in relation to his civilised England, using colonial discourse of 'primitiveness' and

'savagery' which places J.L. in the position of the 'colonised': "I've never felt so far from the world. It's damn primitive. I thought the cook would help, be a softening influence, but she's as savage as they are" (103). Hudson's attitude demonstrates the emergence of another discursive dichotomy, that of nature and culture. In one formulation of this, women are posited as civilising 'culture' to man's essential 'nature'. Ivan, the helicopter pilot, when he is aware that J.L. will be the only woman in camp, reflects that "it seems like camps that have women in them are more relaxed, easygoing. Guys don't get so hostile, so foul-mouthed, as they do if they see nothing but men for three months" (45). While he idealises women as 'culture', Franklin idealises both women and the land as 'nature', passive background to his active 'culture', his creative 'consciousness'. He casts the landscape in the traditionally feminine role of muse, source and inspiration for male creativity: "It's when I'm up on the mountain that I can meditate best, . . . that I can find words for the poems. High as the eagles, that's when I know my soul is purest. . . . Geology is a way to seek out the wilderness" (80). However J.L. notes that "he seems to have no connection to the rocks at all" (138). Franklin places J.L. in this role of poetic inspiration along with the land. He remarks, "I've started a sequence of poems about her" (80), and his narratives begin and end with portentous and pretentious 'poetic' homages to her (80; 81; 168).

However to Jerome, who represents the violence of patriarchy, both women and the landscape represent wild, unruly elements which must be tamed into submission. An aggressive bravado characterises his relation not only to women, but to the landscape and its inhabitants. If his superior knowledge does not tame them, violence will. When he hears about the bear J.L. has been seen with, he reasons, "Bears aren't interested in messing with humans. And if the old sow is, we'll see how she feels about my Magnum. I hope I run into her out on the slopes, I'll finish her off quick" (115). Similarly, J.L.'s refusal one morning to cook him bacon causes him to decide "'It's time somebody started nailing her down" (142).

It has already been pointed out that *The Tent Peg* does not contest patriarchal power over access to land in terms of women's equal right to land as property. Instead, as well as illustrating the discursive constructions which link women and land, and assume the power of the male subject to define them, *The Tent Peg* constitutes a critique of patriarchal property relations over both land and women. Indeed, to a



large extent the dichotomised discourses of nature and culture, wilderness and domestic ideal, posit the possessive subject as centre of definition. As has been mentioned, each of the main characters except Jerome has been named for an historical explorer. Among the discourses which circulate around the activity of exploration are those of 'discovery', 'naming' 'recording', and 'claiming' lands; *The Tent Peg* shows these also to be central to those latter-day explorers, geologists. Even those characters generally represented in sympathetic terms tend to conceptualise their place on the land in such discourses of priority and possession, evoking the first term of an underlying 'virgin-whore' dichotomy.

Thompson describes the appeal of geology as "'The barrens. Going to places where nobody's been. The possibility of finding a mine'" (157). MacKenzie is protective of, and secretive about his program, sure of finding a mine as he did with Meteor Ridge, the find that made his 'name' in geology (12). He acknowledges the excitement he feels at staking a claim, claiming a find as his own, significantly in terms suggestive of sexual arousal: "I still get that prickle in my blood when I think of staking what I know is a good property, hammering it into two-post markings so that you know it's yours, you've got it" (163). The desire for priority and exclusivity -- property -- obviously leads to competition, and when he hears that the plans are to be changed and he will be sent to check a uranium prospector's report in the Wernecke Mountains instead, MacKenzie is panic-stricken: "Somebody else will find my mine. And suddenly I'm mad. 'You're not giving it to Jerome?'" (34). For his part, Jerome believes "I've been out ten years, it should be my program, I know far more than he does about uranium, far more than he does about the area" (26). Such notions of property and competition form both the discursive context of their ostensible activity in the mountains and, in what is the actual focus of the text, the nature of men's attitudes towards women, and J.L. in particular. Jerome's assumptions about the function of a husband to "control" his wife are perhaps most aggressively expressed, but are little different in essence from Thompson's need to marry Katie because then he could be "sure of her". As he tells J.L., "'At least I would know she belonged to me'" (158).

J.L. has sought the isolation of the mountains precisely to escape the "countless fetters" (23) of possessive demand made on her by lovers, ex-lovers and would-be lovers. However, as Zeke, a Déné bouncer in

Yellowknife, observes before they leave for the mountains, "MacKenzie's got himself a bear trap" (22), among whose meanings, which will be elaborated as appropriate throughout the discussion, is a reference to "the mounting sexual desire of the men in the camp for J.L."<sup>9</sup> MacKenzie's discovery of J.L.'s gender is closely followed by the observation that "I haven't had a woman for three years" (30). The same implication that J.L. represents an object of consumption occurs in Roy's observation that "Cap looks at her like she's a melting ice-cream cone" (104). Hearne wants to claim and possess J.L. in a different but no lesser way: "If I could only talk J.L. into letting me take a few shots of her" (147).

Jerome gives expression to his own assumptions about J.L.'s availability and accessibility when he complains that "any one of those guys can easily sneak into the cook's tent" (54). However, although most of the men do try to impose themselves on her, not all do so in quite the crude way that Jerome implies, accuses them of, and finally attempts himself. Certainly, sexual tensions pervade the camp, and J.L. is held responsible. Milton persistently and paranoically holds J.L. responsible for his own sexual tension, and his resultant moral and spiritual crisis. He tells himself "She looks at me, she dares me. . . . She makes me feel all scratchy and bad, like I've done a sin just looking at her" (148). Yet even in his *naïveté* he articulates the root of the all-pervasive tension. Describing the fight between Jerome and Hudson after Jerome has seen Hudson leave J.L.'s tent one night, and has made offensive accusations, Milton wonders "why are they fighting when they're both after the same thing in the end" (178). Again the responsibility is laid with J.L.: "Wherever girls are they do that, they start men off" (178).

Nevertheless, a number of the men are more determined to impose their subjectivity upon her in a manner which defines her more as a mirror than a receptacle. Hudson seeks her out to talk about his unhappiness, his homesickness, and his problem with Jerome (169). Franklin wants to "make her understand" his poetry and philosophy (80), and well into the summer notes "I'm still trying to get her to listen to me. If she would let me talk to her for half an hour I could convince her" (168). Milton wants to ask her how you kiss a girl (199), and MacKenzie believes that she could "explain what Janice wanted" (145), while Thompson realises he wants to "tell J.L. all about [Katie]" (152), and soon he is

"leaning toward her spilling everything, Katie dancing, Katie needing me. .  
." (157).

Through J.L.'s consciousness these attitudes are critiqued, and she directly challenges each of the men on his assumptions and presumptions. She is just as perturbed at their presumptuous invasion of her solitude. She writes to her friend:

Ah Deborah, it's started. They're coming to me one by one, pouring their pestilence into my ears, trying to rid themselves of the poison. I can't blame them, the goddess knows they need to tell somebody, but oh, the weight of those words. They suck at me like quicksand but I have to listen. (172)

However, J.L.'s resistance is necessarily ambivalent. She finds there is no position outside of patriarchy from which to contest its constructions and placement of women. As she is told in her spiritual communication with Deborah through the she-bear, "'You thought you'd leave all that behind? There isn't a place in the world without it. You can try to escape, but it's better to face it head on'" (111).

Not only does she compromise her own separation from patriarchal discourse as she becomes a listener, a reflector, a *mother* in relation to whom they can become men<sup>10</sup> -- an earth-mother -- but a critique of patriarchal discourses which equate women and land as problem and/or property becomes a valorisation of the connection between women and land as 'natural', intuitive and spiritual. Another dichotomy is established: that of men's relationship to land as possession or property, perceived by the rational gaze, and that of a spiritual, intuitive connection. The men are placed on the former pole of the opposition (including Milton, whose institutionalised, church- and text-based Christianity is differentiated from the 'immediacy' of spirituality). At the opening of the novel, the entry of the aeroplane into the peaceful landscape of the tundra is presented in imagery of intrusion: "the plane thuds. [It is] as if the ground flings the reverberation of our passing back at us" (7). However, imagery also links J.L. to the landscape, indeed identifies her with it. Passing over the "cracked and wrinkled face of the tundra, expressionless white but for a few black lines of water. . . . white snow and black water a striated spectrum", J.L. is "mesmerized, *frozen* here looking down" (7; my emphasis).

Later, Hudson laments that "There's a faint smell of spice in here, a smell I sometimes catch when I'm walking, trudging behind Jerome, but of course I never have time to stop and find out what it is, what kind of plant or flower it comes from" (169-70). In effect, this constitutes a critique of the suppressed teleology, enslavement to the Western colonising gaze, of mapping, in which:

the apparent coherence of cartographic discourse is historically associated with the desire to stabilize the foundations of a self-privileging Western culture. . . . [however] contradicted by what Rabasa calls 'blind spots' in the map which, brought to light in a rigorous deconstructive reading, identify the map's supposedly 'universal' mode of representation as a set of rhetorical strategies which reinforce the prelocated authority of its European makers. Furthermore, these blind spots reveal flaws in the overall presentation of the map which allow it to be read in alternative, 'non-European' modes.<sup>11</sup>

The smell of the moss represents a blind spot in the knowledge of the landscape gained through the activity of geology, rendering its textuality, suggested in the maps poured over by MacKenzie, the lists that he makes, and even the certainty of what it is they expect or hope to find, as incomplete. On the contrary, J.L., as well as cooking, quietly and secretly gathers the spicy moss and sews it into samples as small but symbolic gifts for the men. On a flight, Ivan sees her "toward the base of the mountain. . . . stooped over, looking at the ground", until she "straightened up and put something in a little bag" (93). Neither he, nor Thompson who also sees her, can imagine what she is doing.

It is on another flight, this time with J.L., that Ivan also sees "far below us on the grayish tundra . . . a huge brown spot that seems to be moving. And sure enough, it's running, lumbering along" (95). However, the interaction that occurs between J.L. and the bear is clearly even then some form of spiritual communication. Even with J.L. in the helicopter they recognise each other, as slowly the bear "raises herself on her hind legs and stands there, immense, reaching for the helicopter as if she will pull us out of the sky with her raking claws", while J.L. breathes "'God, . . . That's her. She's incredible'" (95). This is only the prelude to direct communication between J.L. and the bear. Cap observes:

J.L. stands behind the cooktent, perfectly relaxed and easy, and facing her, twenty feet away and reared up on her hind legs, is a huge goddamn grizzly bear. J.L.'s face is tilted up and the she-bear's face is

tilted down and they're looking at each other like they've met before. And then J.L. sweeps off her hat and bows at the same instant that the bear seems to shrug and drops to her feet. For a moment they stand there as if in conversation, then they both turn. J.L. goes back into the cooktent and the bear lumbers away down the valley. (108)

J.L. refers to the men as "Men with no ears, men with no connection to the earth" (121). By contrast, even at the height of potential annihilation by an enormous rockslide through which they all slept, she does not move, but remains fixed to, or "planted in" the earth, an image which evokes the naturalness of her place on and in the land(scape):

I felt the mountain rumble, I felt it stir and I was instantly awake, listening with every bone arched. . . . I move to balance myself so that my feet are planted firmly, take a deep breath. Silently I call, the invocation blossoming from my skin, my sorrow, the very spaces in my bones. . . . Then through the soles of my feet I feel again that spasm, the earth gathering herself. . . . I stand there, rooted to the sound of the cataract, hear it growing huge and loud until I can see that gray wall of stone rushing down to fling itself against the gentle curve of the cirque. But it doesn't stop, it carries itself down the cirque toward me, its thunder crashing in my ears, so close I cry out in terror, hold my palms against it roaring over me, my body ground by rocks. It rumbles itself still then, the slow echo of an enormous letting go. I hear a stone roll not ten feet away, and in the after-silence I finally dare to open my eyes. My feet are still planted steady in the moss. . . . I kneel then, press myself down and whisper, rock myself and whisper softly until the earth and I grow still, calm ourselves. (121)

Although J.L. is in spiritual and intuitive communication with the mountain from the beginning, by the end of the description of the landslide, J.L. and the mountain are spiritually and emotionally identified, or identical. Indeed, she corrects Thompson's automatic placement of himself as the centre of even a mountain's activity, when he declares, "'Boy, I'd rather sleep through it than see it coming for me'" (123). As she points out, "'It wasn't coming for me'" (123).

J.L.'s spiritual communication with the land, whether the mountain or embodied in the she-bear, emphasises, along with the refutation of the human centre of consciousness, that the land exists independently of that consciousness, that the impositions of patriarchal discourses are at best merely superfluous supplements, at worst, falsifications. J.L. plays a mediating role in pointing the men grounded in patriarchal property relations towards acknowledgement of a spiritual and subjective integrity

of the land, and of women. This is suggested in the echo of MacKenzie's sensuous handling of rocks in the description of his sensual encounter with J.L.:

I can walk, move from outcrop to outcrop, draw the contours on my map, feel the grain of the rock in my hand. (62)

He touches her, takes the narrow bone cage of her body and turns it between his hands, carefully, exploring, holds her and smooths her and shapes her between his calloused hands like a forming vase, like a shape becoming. (211-2)

However, the overall movement of the novel serves to eclipse the role of the land with the contestation of patriarchy. As the focus is placed more on the interactions between the men and J.L., the land becomes more and more the literal and metaphorical background against which these interactions occur. Although in many ways J.L.'s relationship to the land is contrasted with that of the men, primarily as oppositions of materiality and spirituality, violence and non-violence, these oppositions are not sustained to the resolution of the novel. Despite the description of the noisy intrusion of aircraft into the mountains, J.L. enjoys the helicopter rides to the extent that she wants to learn to fly: "'Isn't it something? Riding over the mountain tops like that. I wish I could fly one of those things'./ . . . 'I love it'. . . . 'Swinging over the valleys. Almost as if you're in a cradle that some enormous hand is carrying through the sky'" (117). However, more problematic still is the participation of J.L. in the claim staking after the discovery of gold. This is not simply her participation in, and extension of, property rights, but it is described in terms which add a puzzling element to the otherwise consistent 'tent peg' imagery throughout the text, which is associated with the violence of patriarchy against women and against the land, as well as with J.L.'s symbolic challenge to, or encounter with, patriarchy. However, the imagery is used in descriptions of J.L.'s claim staking. Thompson says, "And she does it, she stakes eight claims. Pounds the post into the ground. . . . She is hammering the last post" (208). Even more explicitly, Hearne describes J.L.:

standing over that stake, leaning herself and the hammer into the ground until she becomes a movement of striking, driving that post deep into the temple of the earth. . . . For a moment it is as if she is hammering that stake into everything I have ever known or photographed, hammering the very pulse of life. (210)

It is therefore necessary to read the land not simply as a symbol of the female or the feminine: if it were, J.L.'s hammering would have the same violent meaning as the men's. Indeed, J.L. does not eschew violence altogether. As she reflects:

I know we're supposed to change them with non-violence, we're supposed to show them by example, turn an oblique cheek until they wear themselves out. That's the slow way. I can think of a few methods to bring quicker peace. All we need is the daring, the nerve. Of course we'll be condemned for acting, we'll be forever traitors and bitches, have broken all the rules of hospitality, but we'll have gotten what we want. To hell with the historians and analysts. They always decide against us anyway. (190-1)

The land, rather, is used in the novel as a symbol of female autonomy. The nature of the men's relationships both to the land and to women has been shown to be informed by a belief in their status as property or possession, as their staking of claims on the mountain is paralleled by their attempts to stake claims to J.L. and the other women they relate to. Thus the violence is ultimately less physical than psychical or social, effected by possessiveness. Against this, J.L. struggles to preserve her freedom from the men's claims, just as she points out their presumption in believing they can claim, name, or have a hold over, women in general as possession. J.L.'s driving the stake into the mountain therefore represents her staking a claim to female autonomy, and presents at least the threat of violence as a valid strategy for the attainment and preservation of that autonomy.

Paradoxically, the positing and valorisation of a special relationship closeness between the land and women, using images of inter-connection and wholeness of all living things by way of an omnipresent spirit of place, is undermined by this very notion of female autonomy. As Plumwood argues:

Feminist philosophy has . . . developed a critique of the conception of the self as autonomous and lacking essential connection to others or to nature, pointing to its links to masculinity. They have also . . . challenged the account in which the human is defined against and in opposition to the natural (and the feminine), just as traditional masculinity is defined against and in opposition to the inferiorized feminine.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, the feminist autonomous self, disavowing its interconnectedness with masculinity, is in fact isomorphic with the masculine conception of the self.

In *Palomino*<sup>13</sup> Jolley uses landscape to serve the literary function of metaphor for women protagonists' emotions, fears and desires. Laura is a relatively privileged woman with the means to own land in her own right, and her security of place is reflected in her relationship to the land as a refuge: "When I go through the gate and am actually on the land I feel no harm can ever come to me" (19). It contrasts with the perception of Mrs Murphy, the tenant, whose economic alienation from the land is reflected in her alienated perception of it: "'Terrible cold in winter real frost up here . . . . Clouds come up . . . but no rain ever falls when you want it. Your creek's salt and so is your soil . . . . and up on the slope nothing'll grow" (23). However, the landscape represents more than Laura's security; it is also a metaphor for her love and sexual desire for women, and her wish to live free from social, and particularly male, intrusion. Thus her land is described in terms which evoke the sensuality and contours of women's bodies. She lives "hidden away in the secret folds of a narrow valley where the land is mine and no-one else can come there without my asking them to come" (19). Once a gynaecologist, her research interest had been "The tender beauty of the pregnant woman . . . the soft rich skin of the breasts, the smooth white thighs and tender expression in the eyes . . . ." (175). Now that she has been de-registered, she laments her inability to publish gynaecological texts, and even considers it presumptuous to read the *British Medical Journal*. Instead, she begins to read the landscape of her secluded farm: "[N]ow my interest is in the experience of trying to understand the sky and knowing which clouds will bring rain. It is the harvest which concerns me now, my land and my trees and what can be produced from them" (15). However, both 'texts' are read not simply in terms of fertility, but of sexuality itself.

When Andrea arrives to stay with Laura, the relationship between Laura and the land parallels that between Laura and Andrea, as Laura tends, cares for, and nurtures both. However, she also writes herself on to both as she moulds them to her desires. The shaping and cultivation of the land is a kind of substitute for publication. She refers to her grape vines and fruit trees as "'Just a small cultivation in a lot of land! . . . These are the small changes a person on her own can make on the land" (69).



The notion of Laura writing (and publishing) the land is re-inforced by her positioning of herself as performing subject on the land. Andrea notices Laura's "rotting tins and tubs of plants, rosemary and mint and other herbs, she has them on planks of wood resting on oil drums in tiers like an outdoor theatre" (69), and later she asks Laura, "'Have you watered your audience?'" (112). Laura herself, working on the land, notices that "All along the top paddock birds rise suddenly, tawny flight of doves flying up with a clapping of wings, a tiny scattered applause" (106). Gynaecology is not the only source of inter-texts for Laura's reading of the land. Her perceptions are themselves (already) 'written' in the poetic descriptions which liken the landscape to those of the Russian countryside in Tolstoy's writing (24).

Laura's repeated assertions of her possession of the land parallel the smothering possessiveness she comes to exert over Andrea. Just as she refers to "coming home to my house and my land" (36), to "this land which is mine" (48), and to "My vineyard" and "My orchard" (69), she is more jealous than shocked when she learns of Andrea's incestuous relationship with her brother, and her pregnancy. Similarly, descriptions of features of the landscape parallel both the changing emotions of the women, and the state of their relationship. As Laura 'reads' her land, "learning about the secret flesh of sweet fruit whitening beneath the glow of fragrant ripening" (15), the descriptions of the fertility of the orchard intensify with, and parallel her growing awareness of Andrea's pregnancy. However, when Laura feels the relationship to be threatened she reflects that "The morning was endowed with that promise of summer which for me holds something of menace. The warm fragrance is intense. The earth . . . shimmers with eucalyptus vapour" (196). Similarly, Andrea's feeling of claustrophobia -- entrapped by her pregnancy, by the presence of the visitors, and now also by Laura's hold over her -- is both objectified and magnified in her perceptions of the lack of air and the bitterness of the water. The beginning and end of their relationship is symbolised by the honeysuckle. When their love was fresh, the perfume was associated with their love-making (129), however, the imminent end of the relationship is signified by Laura's comment that the rotting smell is "'the honeysuckle, its time is over'" (227).

The relationship between the women, and the basis for their place on the land, is also shaped by a complex inter-textuality. Laura's love for Dr

Esmé Gollanberg has been kindled by her reading of Dr Gollanberg's research papers, and her construction of an idealised image of Gollanberg through them, and it is to this image of her that Laura sends letters professing her admiration and devotion. This image is shattered when Dr Gollanberg arrives and is found by Laura to be elderly and ailing: "I looked for someone graceful, kind and clever. . . /I first saw you, small, thick set and stout, an animal stranded from its hole in the night" (178). Unable to tolerate the discrepancy between the textual construction and the 'reality' -- and unable to see this discrepancy located in her own reading, both of the texts *and* the 'reality' -- Laura 'kills' the ailing Dr Gollanberg. Having been de-registered from the medical profession, Laura now lives isolated and friendless on her land (52). Andrea's remaining on the land is also to some extent governed by the letters and diaries Laura leaves for her to read as she disappears for entire days to work on her land. These texts divulge those aspects of Laura's past she is most afraid will drive Andrea away.

However, by the end of the novel, Laura has learned that the relationship cannot remain authentic if it is governed by the notion of possession, and she must let Andrea go. Similarly, in a gesture which acknowledges the dangers of reading and writing as informing one's reality, dangers which were fully realised in the relationship between Laura and Esmé Gollanberg, there is a repudiation of textuality as an authentic basis for the relationship between them in Laura's forbidding of any letters (252). As she wrote to Dr Gollanberg, never able to tell her, "If you were stout and noisy and ugly it is my fault, not yours. It is my way of seeing you which was at fault" (184).

*The Newspaper of Claremont Street*<sup>14</sup> combines a number of motifs of social marginality, and received and imposed texts of place or belonging, in what could be read as an allegory of post-colonial acknowledgement and subversion of Europe. Margarite Morris, or 'Weekly' as she is known, is a working-class cleaning woman. She is also a migrant to Australia from the industrial Black Country of England, where "nothing would grow except thin carrots and a few sun-flowers. . . [All] around the place where they lived the slag-heaps smoked and smouldered and hot cinders often fell on the paths" (58). Once in Australia Weekly harbours a secret desire "just for a few acres to be her own land" (62), and she has a particular valley in mind. However, her ambition is an ambivalent one, coloured by the inheritance of class and cultural barriers to its realisation. She finds it

"a strain . . . thinking about the valley when she felt she had no right to go looking at land" (57). For Weekly, "the thought of possessing land seemed more of an impertinence than a possibility" (58).

However, money is largely able to neutralise differential access to property, and the money she has carefully saved is linked to land in dreams and fantasies which metaphorically translate the 'textuality' of money into land itself. For example, her thoughts linger "on the shining slopes of her money mountain" (30). Her knowledge of the land, and the basis of her access to it, have been gained through reading advertisements. However, as she visits the properties advertised, she finds their textual representation often misleading:

An abundance of water, as written in the advertisements, seemed to Weekly to present moss trimmed troughs . . . with paths of washed pebbles alongside. She seemed to see the clear water flowing over, from one deep trough to the next, all down the hillsides. The water was clean and bright and cold and there was plenty, so much that it overflowed and washed the sides of the troughs, cleaning the moss and cooling the feet of those who went there. . . . She never saw water like this . . . . More often the ground was damp and swampy. (61)

Yet when she finds the five acre section described by the land agent, the inaccuracy of its textual representation is quite different: "It was like the things she had read about, only far more beautiful because of the stillness and fragrance. These things are not put into the advertisements" (85).

Nevertheless, despite her material ability to own land in Australia, Weekly faces much more difficult ideological barriers. These are symbolically represented in the presence of Nastasya, a once aristocratic and now dispossessed Russian refugee whose house she cleans and who constitutes an exploitative emotional and physical dependence on Weekly. Nastasya represents the ideological class violence inherited from Europe, and expressed in a dream of her late husband's ("I have dream . . . I beat my lazy servant" [67] ), and this is figured in her function as a physical barrier preventing Weekly from assuming a place on her land. Weekly finds that in her constant presence and never-ending demands, "She had become an obstacle, a kind of wall which Weekly would have to climb over every day before she could do anything" (67).

Unable to abandon Nastasya in the city, however, she takes her to the land. During the planting of a pear tree in the clay soil far from the house,

Nastasya, wearing Weekly's boots, begins to sink into the earth, while Weekly returns to the house and her new-found freedom. Some time later, when the new owner of the neighbouring property visits her, he notices that "Next to the pear tree was a curious earth covered mound about the size of a man bent double" (115). Weekly explains, "'In a coupla hundred years there should be a interesting fossil here. In the interests of science, you see'" (115). Thus, a dependence on the texts of inherited European ideology and its systems of privilege and marginalisation cannot remain unchallenged within post-colonial Australia, but nor is it now possible to efface Europe completely from the land and its history.

### 3. IV. The Ambivalent Authority and Inauthenticity of the Text.

If it is accepted that on an important level the landscape has slipped from the ostensible focus of the narrative to become simply the point of reference in the contestation of colonising and patriarchal discourses, it is relevant to ask not only how and why this apparent slippage has occurred, but also how and why the landscape is employed in this function at all. In other words, that the landscape is used to reflect problematic relations between men and women may suggest an underlying anxiety about relationships to the land.

The post-colonial availability of indigenous discourses of presence, as has been shown, has supported -- in an undecidable discourse/counter-discourse relation -- the formation of post-colonising discourses of presence to specific identity constructs. The former also both contrast and are inter-dependent with, and even shape perceptions of the alienations of capitalism, producing characterisations of the industrialised landscape as 'fallen' compared to a posited 'pre-colonial' state of 'innocence'. The Christian terms of this opposition demonstrate post-colonial susceptibility to the 'spiritual' content and force of indigenous discourse. It is also within this context that there is an easy slippage from an 'innocence-fallen' opposition to that of 'innocence-guilt'. There is no inevitable link between spirituality and morality, but it is an important Christian assumption. Thus 'fallen' post-colonial society is also 'guilty', implying that 'innocent' indigenous tradition is also morally 'innocent'. The post-colonial guilt complex has produced an anxiety of post-colonising legitimacy and belonging on the land, an anxiety which is often focused upon the legitimacy of the texts or textuality that authorised that belonging. A number of post-colonial texts therefore address the

ambivalent authority and inauthenticity of Western textuality in determining relationships to the land in post-colonial societies and economies. Such questioning may be found as the problematisation of associative relation to the land, belonging in the sense of authentic habitation, including psychical or perceptual habitation (where it is precisely Western literary practices which are problematised), or in the possessive relation which positions land as object of exchange. In the latter case, the "element of undecidability" inherent in textuality is evoked in situations where putative ownership is revealed as illusory.

In *The Temptations of Big Bear*, this sense of colonising and post-colonising guilt is demonstrated in the critique of the 'fairness' of the terms of white accession to the land. This critique is always informed by the lack of equality of the terms of, and participants in, the exchange of the land for 'payment'. In other words, it is a critique fully informed by Western notions of justice and value in an exchange economy. The conditions under which treaty signatures are secured are alluded to as ones of duress. As Governor Alexander Morris ponders the beauty of the landscape, he asks himself, "Who would sign away such land? As if they had a choice" (11). A constituent of that duress, even deception, is the inequality of understanding of the power and the implications of the treaties. This is demonstrated in terms of their imposition of another law over the extant Indian laws of freedom and restriction, illustrated in Big Bear's complaint that "All I see is the little piece of land I must choose and then never leave unless some Farm Instructor says I can go. What is that, when I must have the mark of such a thing on paper to walk on the land they have borrowed?" (199). It is also demonstrated in the appearance of unexplained and unexpected implications of the treaties. Again, Big Bear: "About the papers they must sign before we can go visit our friends? There is nothing in any treaty about such papers. Did you ever sign one? I will never ask anyone if I can go somewhere" (204).

The inequality of value of items exchanged or payments made for the value of land (also posited with reference to a white system of value), is also suggested. Shortly after Sweetgrass has signed the treaty, the Governor observes that the assembled chiefs "wore the coats and huge medals they had received on signing the treaty; a few sported beavers, one a woman's floppy hat" (18). The valuelessness of this is an ironic foreshadowing of the later imagery of throwing sticks at the Queen's hat as

the nearest available translation (exchange) for the crime of treason. The land that had provided sustenance is exchanged for 'payment' that goes no way towards the same end. As Big Bear argues against signing, "it was obvious to anyone watching the traders who appeared at the payments like leaves in spring that the papers the People received at treaty provided almost nothing. Twelve together might get one gun, two one bag of flour, one almost a blanket" (72). Indeed, payment at all is shown to be unreliable at the very point that its assurances are taken to be protection against famine. At Crowfoot's refusal to fight the white police, Sitting Bull protests, "But your children are crying with hunger." At this, Crowfoot points out that "The treaty says we will be fed when there is famine," while Sitting Bull's retort generates uncertainty as to the source or the 'naturalness' of the famine:

'The treaty!' Sitting Bull spat. 'I have seen treaties signed by commissioners in the name of Whiteskin government that said they would give rations every day, not just in famine. And they would build everyone houses, food and houses is what the treaties said'. And he spat again, violently into the dark emptiness of the lodge. (103)

However, as well as problematising the equality of the terms of exchange, there is a critique of the capitalist ethos itself. In discourse curiously reminiscent of (or anachronistically foreshadowing) Marxism, and in the context suggesting the idealisation of indigenous traditions in terms of 'natural socialism', Big Bear is reported by Robert Jefferson as accusing that "You keep numbers of every hoe and seed, you dole out food that is ours by treaty a pound at a time, exactly measured to how little a man can get a still survive to work as you say" (175). And more fundamentally, white legitimacy in the act and the inheritance of colonisation is problematised in the critique of the very notion of land ownership, the validity of a property-relation to the land. The terms of this critique are drawn from the principle of the living presence of the land and the spiritual order of which it is a part -- terms to which, as we have seen, post-colonising society is particularly susceptible. When Big Bear is urged to choose a reserve, he protests that "No one can choose for only himself a piece of the Mother Earth. She is. And she is for all that live alike" (28). Notions of the human giving and receiving of land are foreign to Big Bear's understanding: "Who can receive land? And from whom would he receive it?" (29). Yet he does understand it as

fundamental to the white land-ethic. He assures the Governor: "'We don't fight with any whites, and I don't want the young men to keep their branded horses because I know with whites that is stealing'" (143), and he questions the justice of well established practices of white-dominated and white-profiting property relations:

'Years before the treaty we heard that the Hudson's Bay Company had sold the land to the Government. When, from whom had they ever received it? I know that they sold what was not theirs for more money than all the People have ever received after eight years of treaty, and besides that the Company still has more land than all of our reserves together.' (204)

However, the Indian land ethic is shown not to be devoid of any notion of 'belonging'. Land is 'given' to them, as evident in Big Bear's reference to "'the land . . . The First One gave me'", but that does not equate with personal property. As he continues, "'I have never for myself wanted the Earth; he takes more from me than I can ever take from him'" (196). Big Bear's meaning is mistaken by the court when he tells it that:

'This land belonged to me. When I had it I never needed your flour and pork. . . . I was free, and the smallest Person in my band was as free as I because the Master of Life had given us our place on the earth and that was enough for us. But you have taken our inheritance, our strength.'" (98)

It is not a possession to which he refers, but an equal relationship between People and land. This eludes the judge, who tells him that: "'on one point you must be corrected. This land never belonged to you. This land was and is the Queen's. She has allowed you to use it. . . . Your people can live there because the Queen has graciously given it to them. The land belongs to the Queen'" (399). In this case, 'belonging' refers only to the securing of land as property by way of (a token of) payment. However, even the legitimacy of white property rights in these terms is compromised by a profusion and confusion of terms in the process of Indian 'pacification'. When the Governor explains that "'We are not coming to buy your land. It is a big thing, it is impossible for a man to buy the whole country, we came here to make certain it is kept for you'", Big Bear responds, "'We therefore understand the land is only borrowed, not bought'" (199).

Thus the anxiety of belonging is in significant part a function of even white uncertainty as to whether the land is bought, borrowed, or merely forcibly occupied; if it is bought, there is the question of the validity of that relation, and the adequacy of payment; and if not, there is the moral legacy of guilt. These questions turn on the ambivalent authority and inauthenticity of the (white) text as the mediation of the land and its human inhabitants. The Queen, the "Whiteskin than whom there is none higher" (197), is the authority invoked by the treaties. Yet the personal relationship implied by the use of the title "the Grandmother," and assumed by Seenum, who claims, "The treaty is good. The Governor will give it to the Queen Mother and she'll see my mark, and know me" (61), is belied by white acceptance of the principle of representation, a principle inseparable from the absence in writing, that "it was impossible for the Queen to negotiate with one chief alone. The law is one law: the Queen's" (118). To the Indians, the centre of white authority seems endlessly deferred, and in the absence of that centre, inauthentic. Big Bear argues:

'What I see is this: I speak out to one white man, and there is always one higher. I speak for my band as a chief speaks for his people when they have decided, but the Whiteskin I speak to isn't like that. Even the Governor, or the one who came talking so loud and fast from Ottawa and left before the first snow would freeze his shining skin, there is always one higher whom I never see.' (197)

However, the essence of the inauthenticity of the Queen's law is perceived and expressed by Big Bear early in the novel, in response to Governor Morris's assertion that "The law is the same for red and white," that "itself, it is only white" (31).

Western writing is both undermined as a valid basis of law -- unreliable and inauthentic -- and even in its literary form, ridiculed as frivolous and irrelevant as a source of knowledge or the basis of an epistemology relevant to the Canadian land. Western literary constructions of the Indian are discredited through the ironic mode of their representation. Of the Mounties, for example, a post-colonisation icon of Canadian identity, Wiebe writes: "they had already performed most of the unprecedented acts of bravery which would eventually make them almost as useful to adventure romance as the Texas Rangers (never quite, for in ten years they had not yet actually shot and killed a single Indian)" (151). The final phrase echoes an elliptical reference to a cliché of



United States fiction of the 'Wild West', when a white captain returns to his men in battle: "He cuts open a bundle but it is a warrior, not a prisoner as we feared. His friends must have returned for a hasty funeral. . . . [W]e think of the Frog Lake settlers and are glad; he is a good Indian now" (321).

'Imported' literature is ridiculed as a source of understanding, recognition, or coping with the Canadian colonial landscape (see 272). However, Wiebe's use of language in the novel privileges the Indian world view by way of rich and sensuous imagery, rhythmic and tonal variation, and the 'transgressive' narrative techniques -- such as stream-of-consciousness, as evocations of subjective presence over the law -- which are the privilege of literary language. It is contrasted with the dry, pedantic, lifeless language of the courtroom (though this too is expressed through *images* of dryness, suffocation and darkness!). The post-colonial inheritances of white colonisation are problematised as writing, but in a now familiar irony, they are problematised inevitably in writing.

The language of *The Tent Peg* posits the text of the land itself as source of truth and knowledge, at the same time as enacting the literary 'writing in' of the characters. The land is used as a metaphorical emotional and spiritual barometer, registering the presence of the camp and the many social and perceptual shifts that will occur, as on the first night MacKenzie lies awake "hearing the mountain shift" (61). Later, after J.L.'s reluctant shooting lesson, and Jerome's mockery of her failed first attempt, MacKenzie perceives "the force of her anger so strong I thought she would evoke the whole mountain down on us" (84). Not only does the landscape imagery describe J.L.'s emotions, it foreshadows the very eventuality of the rockslide, after which emotional tensions and upheavals are described in its terms. Roy comments soon after it that "Every week the camp seems less stable" (128), and Ivan reflects that "After the slide, everything goes downhill" (131). MacKenzie's particular inability to comprehend the unregulated or undefined is evoked in his contemplation of "Slide: the descent of a mass of earth or rock down a hill or mountainside. I remember the definition so well, but I've never had one practically rush over me" (122). Significantly, the rockslide becomes the reference point for MacKenzie's understanding of the meaning of his wife's leaving. He decides that "it must have been like a rockslide to her, the suddenness, the enormity of it. One small trickle of pebbles taking half a lifetime with it . . . . That is the hardest thing to face, the rockslide of her intention" (131).

Much later, Thompson describes the beginning of the violent encounter between Jerome and Hudson, noting the hostility of the men, and, as if in reflection of this atmosphere, that "Behind Jerome, the gray rubble of the rockslide forms an ominous backdrop" (174). Such imagery rallies the authority of the coherent, imagistically cohesive text in establishing the sense of belonging to the land, and does so by employing the land to guarantee its own authenticity, its own presence. Yet the land is simultaneously used to enact its own inauthenticity in its very alienation in language. It is therefore only language which is present, while the authentic landscape remains absent from/in discourse, and even its discursive placement is largely as backdrop to the action and metaphor for the emotions of the camp. The cultural anxiety generated by the inauthenticity of the discursive belonging to land and landscape -- the inauthenticity of the text -- is acknowledged and confronted by *The Tent Peg* in its identification and critique of the founding 'texts' of Canada.

The use in *The Tent Peg* of the names of historical explorers has already been remarked. This provides a link to history's access to the land in colonisation. It is also a link to the source of mythologies which surround the land and human relationships to it, including the mythologies of wilderness referred to in the last section, and mythologies of heroism. However, the fictionalisation of the characters to whom the names are attached suggests a post-colonial reinvention of the past which amounts to a reinvention of the basis of the place of 'Canada' on the land, and the systems of exclusion and privilege within Canada. *The Tent Peg* is less critical of the activities of exploration, or its contemporary equivalent in geology per se, than of the imposition of alien discourses, the texts that 'authorised' colonisation. However, these are shown to be inseparable.

Zeke, the D  n   bouncer in Yellowknife, occupies an ambivalent position in this post-colonial contestation of the discourses of colonisation. He is conscious of his status as the reversal of a stereotype, although this in itself does not release him from stereotypical positioning: one pole of an opposition is just as implicated in the opposition as the other. He states, "They don't trust me, maybe because I'm D  n  , maybe because I never drink" (21). Similarly, in his role as bouncer he is in the position to bar or eject undesirable patrons, a power that was not held by his historical forebears. However, he occupies a somewhat traditional discursive place

as 'native guide',<sup>15</sup> not in the physical sense, but in the sense that he, unlike MacKenzie, intuitively J.L.'s sex:

I'm on my way to check the can -- maybe it's on fire -- when out comes the funny-looking little guy in the felt hat [MacKenzie's] been drinking with. I grab his arm and he turns and snarls at me without a word, and I'm damned if sure enough it's not a girl. Only women can look mad like that. (21)

Similarly, his reference to J.L. as a bear-trap has multiple significance in terms of the text. Apart from the simple meaning of 'woman', with a biological implication contained in folkloric belief about the scent of menstruating women attracting male bears,<sup>16</sup> and the insight into the sexual tensions that will emerge in the camp, perhaps suggested when Zeke asks MacKenzie, "'You gonna bait it or spring it?'" (41), it is a clear foreshadowing of J.L.'s encounters with the she-bear. Yet unlike the 'native guide', Zeke does not accompany the geologist-explorers into the landscape. Just as he only has one narrative of his own, towards the beginning of the text, his physical presence in the text/on the landscape fades out with the beginning of the geologists' mission: "Zeke snorts and claps one huge hand on MacKenzie's shoulder before he turns back to the post at the door. 'Have a good summer,' he says before even he becomes a blur" (41). Although it has been argued that Zeke "stands for the D  n   spiritual presence, which is part of the Northwest Territories 'even if you go out there and you ignore it'", and that he also stands for "D  n   social and physical presence,"<sup>17</sup> this overlooks the problematic status of colonising and post-colonising representation of the indigene as predicated on his/her absence. Similarly, there is an idealist positing of spiritual presence outside of, and therefore sealed from the effects of (colonising/post-colonising) consciousness, which is just as fortuitous for post-colonising rationalisation of, or complicity in, the social and political marginalisation of the indigene as it is for the redemptive positing of indigenous wholeness and authenticity.

Each character can be linked to a discursive element of colonisation, to discursive cargo brought to the land, a way of not reading the land, but fitting the land into their own 'texts'. MacKenzie's absorption in, and reliance on, maps characterises not only his way of relating to the land, but of finding a course through life. He is commonly seen "hunched over his spread maps, studying them as if they could reveal something, as if they

might protect him" (38). His seemingly endless work "on the maps and airphotos, [getting] the stratigraphy straight in [his] head" (15) can, however, only prepare him for the expected. Even as he charts and thereby fixes 'new' pathways, inscribing land presumed blank of previous inscription, "moving from outcrop to outcrop, draw[ing] the contours on my map" (62), he excludes the unexpected, unknown otherness of reality, the reality of otherness.<sup>18</sup>

Journalistic, artistic and literary recording also 'wrote' the land, and wrote the European into the land. In the novel, Hearne the photographer and Franklin the 'poet' represent these discursive functions. Hearne's photography is the only way he can relate to reality. As J.L. notes, "he can see things only if he fixes them forever in a photograph" (138). Significantly, the object of the photograph is not simply the recording of reality, but the fixing of it to his own point of view and his own pre-determined judgements. J.L.'s refusal to pose for him represents her refusal to submit to the ordering and placement of his gaze, and a critique of his limited and fixed focus on the landscape. Franklin's poetry does with words what Hearne's photography does with film; it structures reality and places others within it according to his own governing subjectivity, producing nothing more than a mirror into his own consciousness. It could be argued that the structuring 'gaze' is inescapable, that words cannot reflect reality, only structure it according to the gaze of the perceiving subject. To a large extent, this is precisely what *The Tent Peg* argues. Wherever the subject travels, his or her interpellation into, or resistance to the dominant discourses of his or her culture accompany that subject. The novel's ridicule of Franklin's pretentious poetry is less the ridicule of his individual lack of talent than of the inadequacy and irrelevance of his clichéd and formulaic responses to a landscape he has never before encountered. Thus J.L. could wonder not only "what kind of a geologist he is", but what kind of *poet* he is, who has "no connection to the rocks at all" (138), or in other words, no connection to place.

Hudson represents an aspect of the ambivalence of the imperial-colonial encounter. He embodies the ambivalent hierarchical discourse of the imperial centre over the colonies, in which the 'superiority' of the culture of the metropolitan centre over the colonies is troubled by the nostalgic sense of reality as being elsewhere, somewhere more 'natural'; and he represents the ambivalent imperial cultural centrality and power as

well as metropolitan decadence, conferred by the 'colonies' in their mix of paranoia, deference to, and mockery of England and the English. For his part, Hudson's perceptions are culturally and geographically Eurocentric. His first utterance in the text is "Where in colonial hell are we?" (66). He has arrived perceptually unequipped for what he sees, and can only respond to the mountains in relation to his familiar England: "Bare, gray, no trees, no grass. They surround you, they press you down, they laugh at you like teeth" (66). While England remains his 'centre', he feels "so far from the world. It's damn primitive. . . . / . . . . No civilisation, nothing" (103). Even the geology, incomprehensible to him, is described as "unreal, so complex it's almost impossible to figure out. The age references do nothing but confuse me. These rocks have mineral compositions that I've never seen in England" (103). However, Hudson is not the only one with prejudiced and paranoid perceptions. Hearne remarks, "Trust Jerome to hire a Brit for an assistant, they're taking over geology" (53), while even J.L. describes him in terms of a cultural stereotype, with his "Typical long nose, long face, long teeth. Upper-class British prep school, impeccable accent and manners" (138). The breaking down of the authority of the texts of imperial-colonial relations and the texts -- assumptions, prejudices, blindnesses -- which authorise them, occurs with the unexpected actions and success of Hudson (177), and with the unexpected, even if hoped for, success of finding the gold deposit in the mountains, causing Hudson to exclaim, "Incredible. A gold deposit. Wait until I tell this story at home!" (204). The reversal of the expected movement of discourse from 'centre' to 'periphery', into the flow from 'periphery' to 'centre' destabilises the very conception of the relationship, and is anticipated earlier in the novel, where the texts of Europe are seen as vulnerable to reshaping out of recognition or legibility to imperial eyes. Hudson complains, "Even the airmail letters from home are crumpled and torn by the time they get out here; sometimes I can hardly read them" (103).

One of the texts that did travel from imperial centre to colonial periphery was the Bible, and Milton has similarly taken his Bible into the mountains. Although he is largely private about his faith, he nevertheless imposes it upon the landscape in the sense that he uses it to make sense of his reality. At the beginning of the summer, his reliance on and the centrality of "'the true word'" unshaken, Milton's inarticulacy evokes the little room that a faith of the absolute truth leaves for his own discourse. At this time, he regards the mountains as "'an example of God's glory'"

(66). However "God's glory" begins to conflict with his more secular, pragmatic evaluation of the landscape, which, unlike the land at home, is "only dirt" (101), and the rigidity of the "true word" gives way to more flexible perception. He becomes more articulate, and his descriptions of the mountain landscape demonstrate variation from the "eerie . . . solid darkness" of night (148), to the "distant splash of the lake" (211) and "sinking springy in the moss" (212). Finally, watching MacKenzie and J.L., Milton discovers, "That is how you do it./ . . . That is how you make a kiss" (212). This discovery, significantly, leaves him "rooted to the ground, . . . hammered into the moss" (211). Therefore, a relaxation of his and the Bible's mutual hold over each other has both been the result and the cause of a stronger connection to the land, and by implication, to reality.

The discourse of patriarchy represented by Jerome is another constituent of the discourse of colonisation. Although this has already been discussed in the previous section, it is worth reiterating his compulsion to impose his own view of social order upon the camp. He is critical of MacKenzie because he "hasn't learned to let the assistants do the shitwork" (26), and he ignores Thompson's enthusiasm for J.L. because "his opinion doesn't count" (28). He is scandalised that the crew are drinking before he arrives, and declares "There's no way they're going to get any more, not if I have anything to say about it" (54). He despairs that:

The Jutland's set up facing the lake so the wind will hit that tent square every night. The Storm Havens aren't in a row, they're just any old way. . . . The garbage pit's too close and the shitter is too far away. Somebody's decided to build a shower. I've never been in a camp that needed a shower before. (54)

As has been shown, underlying his objections are the presence and convenience of J.L. Similarly, he is eager to impose his mastery over the landscape and its inhabitants. He believes that if it were under his control he could "save the program!" (115), and is just as keen to use his Magnum against the bear (115) and J.L. (218). The violence of his misreading of the landscape can only be repudiated, and having smugly dismissed MacKenzie's find as "Fool's gold for a fool" (179), Jerome leaves the camp, and as a result does not participate in the staking of claims. It is he who is finally made to look a fool (216-218).

Discussion of *The Temptations of Big Bear* showed how travel and communications technology furthered the colonisation of the Canadian

West, and symbolically 'wrote' the settlers on and into the land. In *The Tent Peg*, access to the mountains is gained by aeroplane and helicopter, while radio communications function to keep the camp supplied with survival requisites. Cap is responsible for communications, logistics, and is camp expeditor. However, his function in the novel is to serve as metaphor for the limitations of a static and formulaic interaction with his surroundings. His discursive isolation, or remoteness from other realities, is emphasised in his self-organised ability to carry out his radio schedule without leaving his tent (85). Indeed, in terms of the larger landscape, he is unique among the men in that he remains in the camp; he does not go anywhere. His relationship to the landscape is purely textual, suggested in his closest contact with geological activity being "sitting in the cooktent making a list of the soil samples" (192). The limitations of Cap's relation to the landscape and other subjectivities is signalled in the frequency with which he describes what he encounters as "Hard to believe. Impossible to believe" (109; 70; 125). Predictably, like the other men, Cap is unaware of the rockslide, and just as predictably finds it "Unbelievable" (125).

Ivan, the helicopter pilot also has a relationship to the landscape mediated by technology. However, like Cap, the technological means that provides access to the land also effects his separation from it. It is clear from his approach to the camp area that his reading of the landscape is technologically shaped and limited. He deduces that because "Half the crew and the equipment fly out in a Twin Otter", that there must be a lake there (46). As he flies in himself, he is grateful for Thompson's accurate navigation: "I would've gotten lost, those damn lakes all look the same" (46). During the camp, he remains remote from the landscape, above it or in his machine. His fear of making contact with the landscape is paralleled by his feeling of safety in distance from other people. J.L. is safe to talk to, "Maybe because it's like she doesn't listen. Does what she's doing and pays no attention" (93). He finds that having her in the helicopter also makes him feel safe, as if she brings him luck (162). However, J.L. forces him to confront the fears within himself which cause him to seek security in rules, patterns, knowledge, and mostly avoidance.

It is more difficult to define the textuality of Thompson's relationship to the landscape. He is happy to be where he is, does not long for somewhere else: "MacKenzie is not happy about this place, but I am. We are camped on a cirque beside a lake, the perfect location, too high for bugs.

... the outcrops here are so much better than on the barrenlands" (48). He is enthusiastic about 'active' geology, wanting to "get out on reconnaissance. Smash some boulders" (100), and his responses to the landscape are sensuous. He notes that "Sitting on that spongy moss with the fire wavering across my face, I feel again that quiet" (151). However, contrary to those who seek to avoid their contact with the landscape through a longing for, or reference to, some other place, Thompson's hubris consists in believing that reality is only where he is; in other words, he represents the centred Western humanist subject, for whom there is nothing outside of his own consciousness. This is suggested in his observation that

There are trees here, a rustling growth that is absent on the mountain, that landscape is so stony bare you come to think it alone exists. Even if you can see the trees far down the valleys, you don't believe they're real, not until you are among them again. (196)

J.L. challenges Thompson to accept the reality and validity of otherness, other places, other lives, other texts.

*The Tent Peg*, therefore, illustrates a number of discourses which served to establish the European presence on the land and ways of perceiving the landscape. Each, embodied in one of the geologist characters, is challenged by J.L., whose own relationship to the land represents not the absence of textuality -- this has been shown to be impossible -- but the privileging of discourses suppressed by the dominant discourses of colonisation. J.L.'s relationship to the land opposes the rational empiricism of geology. Her attunement to the mountain's movements, and her communication with the she-bear have already been described. However, even J.L.'s place on the land is mediated by texts. In fact, despite the novel's critique of the colonising function of the Bible, J.L. is named after the Biblical Ja-el, while her friend Deborah is named after the prophetess. While the novel's relationship to the Biblical story of Ja-el would make an interesting study, it is more relevant here to indicate the unusualness of the story of female victory over male violence. J.L. similarly tells stories from an alternative tradition of women's writing and writing about women. She tells the men about Zeus, Io and Hera (153-5), and a story which recalls Marian Engel's *Bear* (155). Although this is a story of sexual love between a woman and a bear, J.L.'s description of it as "a very strange and beautiful story about a woman who loved a bear" (155)



could also apply to the spiritual relationship between J.L. and the she-bear, particularly as J.L. recognises Deborah in the bear, and tells Thompson of Deborah, "I love a beautiful singer" (159).

J.L.'s identification of Deborah in the bear is, in the end, evidence that even post-colonial contestations of discourses which wrote, and wrote into, the land, are constructed inter-textually, and that the attempt to construct an authentic belonging to place grounded in the spirit or unmediated 'discourse' of place is barred by language. The bear represents less the spirit of place than its appropriation in the positing of this more authentic, undifferentiated, indigenised spiritual relationship to the land, one which is closer to 'women's' relationship to the land. *The Tent Peg* clearly posits a new ethos of place against the patriarchal, rational, empiricist and other discourses which contributed to constituting 'Canada', but it is ultimately mediated by its own ideological hierarchisation of inter-texts, and constitutes its own suppressed voices. Further, it is built precisely on the absence of the land from the text.

Two of Jolley's novels which have used the motif of textual authority and inauthenticity are *Foxybaby* and *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*. Both novels focus on writers of fiction, and in each, fictionality is linked to the importance of setting in the novels, or to a strong sense of place. In *Foxybaby*, the setting is an institution in the wheatbelt, and in *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*, there is a juxtaposition of European and Australian settings. In *Foxybaby*, the landscape is the site of fictionality. The unreliability of text in the inscription of place is amusingly suggested in the opening sequence of letters between Miss Porch and Miss Peycroft negotiating the arrangements for the summer-school class. The arbitrary rendering of addresser and, more particularly, addressee at the tops of the letters demonstrates the instability of text which becomes the informing motif of the entire novel. However, the landscape is also fictionalised in the process of its misreading. A description in authorial voice merges with Miss Porch's perceptions as she drives through the wheatbelt, 'misreading' the land's signs:

There are strange things about driving alone on long lonely roads through the wheat. Old, grey, bent men and women wait indefinitely on green misleading corners, becoming part of the bushy roadside undergrowth as soon as the helpful traveller stops to investigate . . . . And, as dusk advances, more gnarled old men march in formation

keeping up a remarkable speed, alongside, in the shadowy fringes of the saltbush. (13-14)

It has been claimed that all reading is misreading, and this idea serves to establish the link between land as it is (mis)read, and text. It is also now axiomatic that the reader does not approach the text, nor does the text exist, in isolation from all other texts. Readings are informed by prior texts and prior readings, and for the descendants of white settlers in post-colonial societies such as Australia, much of this inter-textuality derives from Europe. It reaches back to mythic patterns and narratives which survive in the perceptual archetypes informing, for example, children's fairy-tales. A clear example of such intertextuality can be found in the description of the landscape as Miss Porch passes through Cheatham East. Moving from a descriptive reading, to metaphorical comparison, to mythic fictionality, and thus following the movement of the novel itself, the high street

very soon becomes a gravel track which, with many twists and turns through endless paddocks of wheat, turns finally and like a river without any water reaches the sea. The place where land and water meet is scattered with enormous rock as if some enormous children, the sons and daughters of a pair of happily married giants, suddenly tiring of their playthings, have hurled them into the sea. (10)

The landscape is also the setting for the summer-school's enactment of Miss Porch's novel. However it is not simply the background against which the drama is played, but is imaginatively incorporated into the performance itself: "The faint roar of the wind rushing across the paddocks was like the sound of the sea. The loneliness of the seashore and the movement of the waves could find a parallel -- the girl could step, mincing, between the wheat stubble stalks . . . " (53). Like Elizabeth Jolley, Miss Porch is conscious of the literary appropriation of the landscape. During a dramatic performance of her novel, her character Dr Steadman tells friends that "all the places where he had walked or ridden with Sandy were fenced off . . . 'D'you see, it was as if the time we'd had together was to be for ever unreachable'./'Oh, you scholars!' the psychiatrist laughs, 'you pedants of literature and drama, you carry symbolism too far!'" (135). Finally, the revelation towards the end of the novel that the entire sequence of events at the Trinity College summer-school has been dreamt by Miss Porch travelling on the bus following her car crash, underlines the fictional association of land and text.

While *Foxybaby* showed landscape to be the site of fictionality, in *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* fiction is the site of landscapes. Again, fiction figures in the text itself as symbolic of the unreliability and impermanence of textual mediations of place, and of the centrality of the imagination in constructing perceptions and meanings of land. The novel is structured by textual journeys between Australia and Europe. Letters, and fragments of a novel written by Diana Hopewell in Australia are sent to and read by Miss Peabody in England, whose replies demonstrate an increasing inability to distinguish between the fictional and the real world. Indeed, her 'knowledge' of the real world is drawn in part from fictional texts: "[Miss Peabody] tried to imagine the hot dry Australian summer. She knew about it from *Angels on Horseback* because the novelist had written about bald, dry earth . . ." (46).

Diana Hopewell and Miss Peabody exchange descriptions and each construct images of the other's landscape. Diana tells Miss Peabody:

I live on the gentle slope of a narrow valley . . . . I live in a ring of trees, very old trees and tall, taller I suspect than your English trees. In between the bunched foliage of glittering narrow leaves there are spaces of sky. There is just such a clear space between the trees like a harbour in the sky directly above my house and shed. (8)

Clearly, even Diana's letters are 'literary' in their use of imagery and metaphorical comparison. Struck by the image of the sky harbour, Miss Peabody, negotiating the journey to work in London "thought she would look at the sky and learn how to see the shapes of it between buildings. This could even be useful in London, to know the sky harbours of the city" (9). However, she does not find it possible to translate the reading practices suitable to the Australian landscape she imagines to her own in a European city: "Looking up at the sky was probably easier on horseback. In the city, looking up made her neck ache and she bumped into people"(9). Similarly, Diana Hopewell accompanies her descriptions of her Australian landscape with questions about Miss Peabody's English one: "Tell me about your trees . . . . I suppose . . . the trees over there are not as tall as our trees. Our Wandoo and Jarrah trees, the Red Gum -- Marri, they are called -- are very old and grow to great heights" (84). It is significant that when Miss Peabody attempts to reply to the letter, her own descriptions of English trees are both self-consciously textual, and at the same time suggest

the prior reading of other texts, perhaps a school textbook, or the caption of a pictorial coffee-table book:

*The magnificent oak tree is the monarch of the English forest . . . she loved composing fine sentences for her replies. The magnificent oak tree is the monarch of the English forest . . . she could hardly wait to write it down. She thought of the hedgerow elms in remote places in the country. Seen from the railway carriage windows at sunset, yes, elms were tall trees. (84)*

In fact, Miss Peabody and Diana Hopewell both contemplate the nuances of language and its constructions of landscape. Caring for her sick mother, one evening Miss Peabody "said the Lord's Prayer softly and sweetly adding a part of the twenty-third psalm which brought to her mind images of Diana's farm which was, she was sure, used as landscape and setting in *Angels on Horseback*./'In pastures green . . . ' Lovely word pasture'" (35). Australian idiom carries the freight of Miss Peabody's fantasy constructions of its landscape. She reflects that "Even the word 'paddock' said far more than either 'field' or meadow'" (7). However, throughout *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*, the focus of perception is Europe.

While half of the narrative follows Miss Peabody's life in England, the other half demonstrates Diana Hopewell's pull to Europe in tracing the fortunes of her fictional characters as they travel there. Miss Thorne's sensibilities are entirely and affectedly English. Diana describes her "indicat[ing] a scrubby corner of a bald paddock known with affection and pride throughout the school as 'our meadow'" (2). Diana's focus upon Europe as cultural centre -- the reason for the fictional journey -- is expressed in descriptions of the 'picturesque' landscape. Initially she works these out through her characters' perceptions on their travels: "Gwenda, like Miss Thorne, looks out of the window. Mountains and more mountains come and go. Even from inside the train there is the feeling of knowing the exquisite sensations of the clear air outside" (49). However, later descriptions are expressed directly by Diana:

There is a little mountain, she wrote, the Kahlenberg, near Vienna, I'll explain about it . . . . From the Kahlenberg there is the most complete and panoramic view of Vienna. In the twilight, at dusk, it is heavenly . . . . The river Danube is like a misty blue path round the city and all round are the famous Vienna woods, the Wiener Wald. (66)

Yet it is not only Europe which is the object of Diana Hopewell's fantasies. Because Australia has largely been an absence in the text, it is only towards the end of the novel when, inspired by her textual creation of the land, Miss Peabody travels to Australia to visit Diana and the farm, that it is revealed that the 'setting' of Diana's life, as inscribed in her letters, had been as fictional as her novel. Miss Peabody discovers that Diana has recently died in a nursing home, and further, that even when she had been alive, the farm had been at most a memory, subject to the textual processes of all writers. Diana had written of:

the fiction which is mounted on truth. Take landscape for example: forests are more mysterious, paddocks are lengthened and widened, escarpments are pushed to greater heights and brought closer to townships. The writer creates the imagined land from fragments of the real thing. (137)

Of course, on another level, these are Elizabeth Jolley's words, evoking the ambivalent mix of authority and inauthenticity of the text, describing both the process and the theme of her own novel. The novel ends with Miss Peabody having found a place which allows the merging of both the perceived and the imagined landscape, from and into which she too can write. Punning the terminology of writing with land ownership (belonging), "All she really needed to enter into her inheritance was a title" (157).<sup>19</sup>

This line from Jolley's novel summarises the conclusion to be drawn from the examination of discourses in this chapter itself; that is, despite the affective discourses of presence and authenticity which comprise post-colonised and 'other' counter-claims to belonging, the post-colonial inheritance is one of textuality. In this context, both authority and (in)authenticity must be understood as ambivalent. The authority of writing as a basis for belonging is problematised by discourses of presence and authenticity, but the latter are themselves problematised by their articulation in texts. At the same time, the inauthenticity which characterises post-colonial textually-mediated relationships to the land constitutes the 'authentic' condition of post-colonialism. In the next chapter, I examine post-colonising claims to discursive authority through representations of the post-colonised other, and the relationship of these to strategic appropriations of 'authenticity' through discursive identifications with that other.

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Notes.

- <sup>1</sup> This is an evocation of the Maori creation myth which posits Ranginui and Papatuanuku, the sky and the earth, as the parents who coupled and produced off-spring. Their children forced them apart to let in light and life.
- <sup>2</sup> See Helen Tiffin, "New Concepts of Person and Place in *The Twyborn Affair* and *A Bend in the River*," in Peggy Nightingale (ed.), *A Sense of Place in The New Literatures in English* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1986), p. 22, for reference to the importance of the journey motif in 'new literatures'.
- <sup>3</sup> This is the reverse, indeed the mirror-image, of the post-colonised discourse of racial privilege. Its 'backlash' status is obvious.
- <sup>4</sup> It can also be read precisely as her emotional description of those very origins and identity, as the painful secrets she cannot divulge remain attached to the place.
- <sup>5</sup> Aritha Van Herk, *The Tent Peg* (1981; London: Virago, 1989).
- <sup>6</sup> As Reingard Nischik points out in "Narrative Technique in Aritha Van Herk's Novels", in Robert Kroetsch and Reingard M. Nischik (eds), *Gaining Ground: European Critics on Canadian Literature* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1985), a number of them remain flat figures, and as I will show, voices for discursive constructions, rather than fully developed, realised characters. He differentiates the characters who "achieve some sort of roundness" from those "who may each be summed up with one sentence," and a third group who "appear either exclusively as adjuncts to J.L. . . . or serve as outside observers" (pp. 116-7).
- <sup>7</sup> Feminist scholarship has both employed and problematised this identification. Val Plumwood points out in "Plato and the Bush: Philosophy and the Environment in Australia," *Meanjin*, 49, No. 3 (1990), that "in the traditions of the West women and men have always been conceptualized very differently with respect to nature, the traditional identification being of women with nature and of men with what opposes it, especially reason. If women are taken to be identified with nature (and with the realm of necessity in human life over that of freedom), a masculine identity formed by exclusion of the feminine/natural within will also be formed by exclusion of the feminine/natural without," (p. 535).
- <sup>8</sup> See Hartmut Lutz, "'Meat and Bones Don't Matter': Mythology in *The Tent Peg*," *Ariel*, 20, No. 2 (1989), pp. 55-56, for elaboration of connections between the names of the novel's characters and the names of Canadian explorers.
- <sup>9</sup> Lutz, p. 57.
- <sup>10</sup> This is supported in J.L.'s description of the men as being "like children" (136).
- <sup>11</sup> Graham Huggan, "Decolonizing the Map: Post-Colonialism, Post-Structuralism and the Cartographic Connection," *Ariel*, 20, No. 4 (1989), p. 118.

12 Plumwood, p. 535.

13 Elizabeth Jolley, *Palomino* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984).

14 Elizabeth Jolley, *The Newspaper of Claremont Street* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1981).

15 See Helen Tiffin, in Nightingale (ed.), p. 22, for a reference to the role and function of the 'native guide' figure in fiction.

16 Lutz, p. 57.

17 Lutz, p. 57.

18 Maps are also very important in Van Herk's *No Fixed Address* (1986; London: Virago, 1989). While Arachne follows maps as she traverses the land in her sales job, she ultimately escapes the containment by textuality they represent as at the end she drives literally off the map (and out of the story). However, her lover Thomas, a map-maker, is similarly obsessed with maps, and this obsession is paralleled by his passion for order in other aspects of his life. Signs and sign-writers are also important in this novel in relation to the theme of the authority and inauthenticity of the text.

19 Elizabeth Jolley also writes about characters whose marginalised status within the networks of the dominant discourse complicates or denies them access to the status and security of land ownership as privileged by that discourse. Such characters frequently appropriate and subvert the textuality governing their access to land. "Bill Sprockett's Land," in *Stories* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1984) pp. 84-89, is a story which turns on the authority and inauthenticity of the textual mediation of access to, or a place on, the land. Sprockett is a migrant from the English Black Country who lives in a suburban boarding house. However, through letters to his father, he textually asserts his ownership of a certain piece of land, thus writing himself into it. The inauthenticity of this textual relationship to the land consists in the fact that the letters are untrue, while his true relationship to the land is constituted by his gaze. This gaze does not merely shape his putative ownership of the land, but also his perceptual or emotional connection with it. At first, the peacefulness and stillness of the land reflects the inner peace he felt on looking at it, and "every time he felt as if he was seeing the land for the first time . . . that he was the first person to look down his valley, for the first time" (85). Thus he reproduced the sense of 'originality' and 'belonging' of the pioneer gaze. However, his father's arrival not only exposes the inauthenticity of the letters, but demonstrates the authority that texts have in determining the relationship to the land. Now that the land could not be seen as his, Bill Sprockett "hardly saw the prettiness" of it (88-9). The shame that both men feel as they leave it for the last time is such that, "They did not look down to the place again, of course it was nothing to them. Without meaning to . . . they crushed the little flowers, little clusters of coral and tiny exquisite orchids with their boots" (89).

In other stories, socially marginalised characters appropriate in order to subvert the textual processes of buying and selling land. Uncle Bernard is a migrant from Holland in "The Outworks of the Kingdom," in *Stories*, pp. 161-167. Informed of his imminent displacement by a planned six-lane highway through his land, he accepts the "fair words and money" (167) he is offered in exchange. However, he mysteriously tells his nephews that "'Sometimes is very good for a man to move his earth before some bodies else do it for him'" (162), then gradually removes a large proportion of his clay soil and rocks and sells them privately for brick-making and land-fill. Apart from resulting in profound changes to the landscape, his scheme means that he sells his land not once, but twice, and with his share of the profits, returns to Holland. See also other 'Uncle Bernard stories' in the same volume: "Outink to Uncle's Place", pp. 75-83, and "The Agent in Travelling", pp. 168-175.

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Finally, in "A Gentleman's Agreement," in *Stories*, pp. 18-24, Mother, a cleaning woman whose social 'place' is largely other people's places, is eventually in a position to sell a small piece of land which had belonged to her recently deceased father. However, at the lawyer's office where the sale of the land to a doctor is arranged and the agreement drawn up, Mother appeals to the doctor's own love of the land to gain his empathy, saying, "I feel if I could live there just to plant one crop and stay while it matures, my father would rest easier in his grave" (23). To the lawyer's consternation, the doctor disregards the written contract and agrees, calling it "a gentleman's agreement" (23). The lawyer nevertheless makes the necessary changes, writing out "a special clause which they all signed" (23). However, despite the renewed consistency of the text with the verbal agreement, Mother's plan subverts it precisely in following it. The seedlings that arrive are for a jarrah forest which will take years to mature. She may have transgressed of the 'spirit' of the agreement, but she remains true to the letter: "Well he can come on his land whenever he wants to and have a look at us," Mother said. "There's nothing in the gentleman's agreement to say he can't" (24).



## CHAPTER FOUR

### OTHERING THE SELF: THE APPROPRIATION OF AUTHENTICITY.

#### 4. I. Introduction.

The previous chapter concluded with a discussion of texts in which there was posited an ambivalent authority and inauthenticity in textual assertions of relationship to the land. Such texts implied the concomitant elusiveness and at the same time authenticity of presence to the land in the privileged forms of speech and physical connection. In this chapter, a number of the issues raised in Chapter Three will be developed, but with a reversal of emphasis. Just as physical as well as spiritual connection to place was posited as the basis of an authentic relation, Chapter Four focuses on the discursive link to an *embodied* point of view. Similarly, just as links were asserted in Chapter Three between the attainment and defence of physical territory, and political and cultural self-determination, Chapter Four examines the notion of a post-colonial discursive 'terrain', and the discursive construction -- or determination -- of a 'self' in contestation or resistance. In other words, instead of looking at how land becomes discourse, this chapter examines how, in the post-colonial cultural context, discourse becomes likened to land, in the sense of demarcated territories over which one may have 'rights', and which is vulnerable to trespass, occupation, or appropriation.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. II. Discursive Territory: Or, Who Can Represent the Other?

As Foucault has pointed out, discourses do not circulate freely and without limitation, but are subject to systems of control and exclusion, such that "we can not simply speak of anything, when we like or where we like; not just anyone, finally, may speak of just anything."<sup>2</sup> Not all discourses have equal centrality or power in any specific social, political, economic or cultural context. Some versions of reality are privileged over others, and the difference is simultaneously a source and a reflection of the difference in social and discursive power. Hegemonic discourses are created through marginalisation or exclusion of others. But Richard Terdiman warns that the term "dominant discourse" is a rhetorical abbreviation which reifies and hypostatizes the "moving and flowing network of practices and assumptions by which, at any of a series of endlessly divisible given moments, social life is structured."<sup>3</sup> Recognised

instead as a "complex and shifting formation,"<sup>4</sup> which as Chapter One argues, is only ever partially embodied, and embodied by provisional and shifting colligated subject positions, it is possible to see how, for example, feminist and indigenous discourses can contest 'it' on different sites of 'its' operation, and at the same time can share programmes and strategies of contestation. At the same time, despite the constraints on the production and circulation of discourses outlined by Foucault, it is therefore important to recognise that as a result of the multiple and partial interpellation of subjects by discourses, "no dominant discourse is ever fully protected from contestation."<sup>5</sup>

However, as Chapters Two and Three showed, the particular anxieties underpinning belonging and authenticity in settler post-colonial societies render 'marginal' discourses vulnerable also, not simply to contestation but to appropriation. Their 'difference' from the 'dominant' is ambivalent: while their particular discursive struggle is one of retaining difference, it could be argued that they are valued as Other in proportion to the perception of their sameness. The post-colonial battle of discourses can therefore be understood as spatial, such that, provisionally reifying the 'dominant' and 'marginal' discourses, marginal discourses seek ground from which to be spoken, and from which to impinge upon or even enter the space of the dominant discourse; on the other hand, the dominant discourse may then re-appropriate that space. Such movement is evident in the ways in which the notion of 'representation' has been employed in literary discourse, effecting the *politicisation* -- in the strongest sense -- of that discourse, and instituting boundary disputes and discursive gerrymanders.

The dominance of a discursive formation is partly dependent on its representation of an Other in terms which suit its hegemonic purposes. Terry Goldie, in discussion of the constructions of such images, has pointed to the ubiquitous references to the indigene as "devil," "fiend," and "demon" in nineteenth-century Australian, Canadian and New Zealand writing. He cites the use of the term "'devilish war-cry'" in Richardson's *Wacousta*; Thomas Bracken, in "The March of Te Rauparaha," describing the attacking Maori as "'like fiends unloosed from hell'" ; and Mitchell, who in his 1839 *Three Expeditions* description of Aborigines, asserted that "their hideous crouching postures, measured gestures, and low jumps, all to the tune of a wild song, with the fiendish

glare of their countenances, at times all black, but now all eyes and teeth, seemed a fitter spectacle for Pandemonium than the light of the bounteous sun."<sup>6</sup> However, apart from uses of the indigene to embody principles of evil and violence, Goldie also describes the use of such images for semiotically self-referential purposes of caricature and parody, and even the evocation of popular cultural stereotypes of the past for the advertisement of consumer products and services.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, writing which employs 'images of' the indigene does not necessarily employ 'negative' images. Reversing Abdul JanMohamed's formulation of the Manichaeian aesthetic, Goldie argues that "in contemporary texts the opposition is frequently between the 'putative superiority' of the indigene and the 'supposed inferiority' of the white."<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, whether the image is positive or negative, it is still an image, and as such, a stereotype. Such stereotypes serve functions defined by and for the purposes of the dominant discourse; functions which define the indigene as the post-coloniser's self-constituting Other: "'The 'bad' Other becomes the negative stereotype, the 'good' Other becomes the positive stereotype. The former is that which we fear to become; the latter, that which we fear we cannot achieve.'"<sup>9</sup> It is therefore necessary to correct the impression that through positive images one can speak, not *about*, but rather *on behalf of* the Other who is deemed unable to represent him/herself. Chapter Three argued that the terms of valorisation of the post-colonised serve a primarily post-colonising purpose of constructing an accessible Other to the failures and degradations of both history and 'progress', redeeming, through naturalisation, settler post-colonial nationalism. Therefore, 'images of' literature is not necessarily negative; it serves (different) dominant purposes just as well to romanticise the figure of the indigene. In either case, the post-colonised, written about by the post-coloniser, are rendered radically absent from/in literary discourse. The discussion of Wiebe in Chapter Two showed that his representation of Big Bear re-inscribed Big Bear's absence, while effecting his own "literary land claim."<sup>10</sup>

Beth Brant evokes a kind of double-bind in which any member of the dominant group is likely to become enmeshed in attempting to represent a minority-group or individual. She argues that "there's a big difference between Indian woman as victim and telling the truth. . . [T]here's romantic images of the Indian woman as the drunk and the slut and all

these things that we've been called as squaw. But there is also a truth that we are poor, that we often have to exist in substandard ways."<sup>11</sup> In other words, while 'negative' images may serve to reinforce prejudicial and stereotypical judgements of racial inferiority, even 'positive' images are complicit with the effacing of history and its legacies of poverty and degradation for the post-colonised. The post-colonising reader avoids confrontation with these 'truths' in favour of the comforting images of a kind of pre-lapsarian plenitude. Therefore, masquerading as benevolence in relation to the Other, and as effecting the supplementation of the dominant discourse, this form of representation no less ensures the continued dominance of the dominant discourse -- the discourse with ground from which to speak. It is not simply a matter of 'positive' or 'negative' images being false, but of historicising their complex relation to reality. Further, as Barbara Godard points out, "That an 'image of the squaw' produced by the dominant culture would become a literary norm that would determine the value of all subsequent cultural productions by Native women which would be measured against it, is a fear expressed by Native writers."<sup>12</sup> Such representation "perpetuates the discourse of white *on* red, or white *on* black, reinforcing the dominant discourse by blocking the emergence of an emancipatory discourse *off/for* red and/or black. . . . Such discursive practices become oppressive when the group in power monopolizes the theoretical scene and there is no counter-discourse, that is no debate among differing discourses."<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, along with the emergence of voices from the margins has come the challenge to, and even rejection of, the validity of speaking for the Other. Referring to the major premise of Maoritanga that Maori, not Pakeha, "be the proper custodians and managers of knowledge about the Maori heritage,"<sup>14</sup> Hanson points out that "some advocates of Maoritanga have invited Pakeha scholars out of Maori studies. Michael King, a Pakeha who has written extensively on Maori topics, observed that in 1971 Maori radicals insisted that Pakeha historians write more about Maori subjects, but by 1983 the demand was that they should not write about them at all."<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Jeannette Armstrong protests that "There are a lot of non-Indian people out there speaking on our behalf and I resent that very much; I don't feel that any non-Indian person could represent our point of view adequately."<sup>16</sup>

However, this discursive ground is also conceded by majority-group members, frequently in terms of expressions of deference to minority-group (self-)knowledge. To cite Hanson again, "The Pakeha historian Judith Binney acknowledged the premise that Maoris are best equipped to understand and write about Maori topics. . . . [S]he expressed misgivings about her grasp of the material and recorded the hope that one day a Maori scholar would produce a more authoritative account."<sup>17</sup>

4. II. (i). **Value-Added Discourse.** Two questions which arise out of such a position -- a position which has attained something like the *unquestionable* status of ideological correctness -- are, what discursive strategies are being employed by the deferent majority-group member and what are their effects? and what assumptions underlie the privileging of (in this case) indigenous knowledge as truth? These questions may be addressed through an analysis of yet another expression of deference in relation to minority-group discourse, and its discursive and literary context. Barbara Godard has referred to "Discussions by native women writers I had been privileged to overhear at the Women and Words Conference, Vancouver, July 1983."<sup>18</sup> Since she refers to discussions *by* rather than *among* native women, in the context of a conference, one can only assume that the event was an open one, and that their discussions were intended for a general audience of conference delegates. Yet Godard expresses deference towards these women by considering herself privileged to hear them, suggesting some special value inherent in their discourse. What could be the source and the nature of this value? Could it be value which Godard herself has added, or imbued it with? As Foucault has shown, discourse which is valued partakes of, or is invested with, the condition of Truth: in short, it has Truth-value. However, in the case of this conference, there is an apparent contradiction between the truth-value of the Native women's discourse and its contestatory position related to their own social marginalisation. After all, Foucault has indicated that the political economy of truth in discourse is characterised, among other traits, by its production and transmission, "under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses."<sup>19</sup> So how, or from what Other ground, can the dominant discourse contest itself? Very simply, "effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false."<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the truth resides less in what is said in substantive terms than in the discursive strategies and forms employed.

This can be illustrated with reference to some statements made by the Native women at this same conference. Jeannette Armstrong, for example, argued that "There are many things that we Indian people understand and take for granted. . . . However, when we start writing about those things . . . we find ourselves explaining many things; we find ourselves talking in terms that aren't necessary."<sup>21</sup> Thus, despite her frustration at this very situation, what she claims to offer, along with other Native women who write, and speak, is the detailed -- or excess of -- Truth, in a discourse whose *density* is a significant guarantee of its *veracity*. However, as will be shown, the truth-effect of her promise of Truth is also produced by its invocation of those things so internal to their being that they need retrieval for, and explaining, only to outsiders. Indeed, she explicitly contrasts this Truth with White falsity in terms of an inside-outside opposition: the masks White people build up of themselves in their writing, as opposed to the "truth and the centre of things." She declares that "Indian writers don't even deal with that mess; they get right to the centre of things and sometimes that's hard for non-Indian people to accept."<sup>22</sup> Therefore, Armstrong both explicitly promises the truth, and in a binary discursive structure, associates the truth with the essentialised category of Indian, while the non-Indian is linked with non-truth. The reference to the 'centre' of things is a further seductive trope, compounding the force of her discourse. In relegating non-Indian concerns to the margins, she has reversed, and yet maintained, the binary structure of the dominant discourse itself. Further, in referring to the excess of information Native women (must) supply for non-Indian readers, she describes a powerful truth-effect of discourse. This can be explained by substituting the term 'race' for Foucault's reference to 'sex' in his insight into the demand for, and production of certain 'truths'. His point then aptly describes the post-colonial discursive context. He writes of

The multiplication of discourses concerning [race] in the field of the exercise of power itself: an institutional incitement to speak about it, and to do so more and more, a determination on the part of the agencies of power to hear it spoken about, and to cause *it* to speak through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated detail.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, in the "explicit articulation," albeit reluctantly, of "endlessly accumulated detail" about the racial self, the truth-effect lies to a significant degree in the very fact that it has been solicited by and to the requirements of the dominant discourse.

Finally, to return to Godard's statement, even within the apparently open context of the conference, opened further by the publication of proceedings, Godard discursively locates herself as an outsider, one who has no 'right' to hear the discourse of the Native women: only the fortune -- or bad manners? -- to *overhear* it. At the risk of *over-reading*, this bears further analysis, as it can be shown that her deference serves ambivalent ends. In expressing her sense of privilege, she privileges *them*, and in doing so, reinforces their extra-ordinary status or position within the institutions of women's and/literary discourse. This is indeed reflected in the titles of the published extracts from Native women's discussions: Beth Cuthand's "Transmitting Our Identities as Indian Writers"; Jeannette Armstrong's "Writing From a Native Women's Perspective"; and Beth Brant's "Coming Out as Indian Lesbian Writers."<sup>24</sup> It is Lilian Allen, who spoke on "Black Women's Writing in Canada" who protests that "when other women get up to speak, they get to represent themselves and their own point of view, but when I get up to speak or do anything I am expected to represent my entire race."<sup>25</sup> However, the point is equally valid for Native women. For example, Godard elsewhere cites a passage from Lee Maracle's novel, *I Am Woman*, which makes precisely this point:

'No-one makes the mistake of referring to us as women either. White women invite us to speak if the issue is racism or Native people in general. We are there to 'teach', or to 'sensitize them', or to serve them in some other way. . . . We are not, as a matter of course, invited as an integral part of 'their movement' -- the women's movement.'<sup>26</sup>

However, the term 'overhear' is a useful basis from which to elucidate further problems in expressions of cultural deference, and enables points from the preceding discussion to be brought together under one underlying *mechanism* for the production of Truth within the context of power relations. One reading of the language of Beth Cuthand's passage in the proceedings suggests the validity of the common meaning of being an unintended interlocutor (which in the context, could still only be a discursive strategy). Cuthand's consistent use of the first-person plural pronoun creates a discursive group unity among Indian women which interpellates those Indian women present and excludes other women. In other words, her 'we' could refer, from her perspective, to 'you' and 'me' among Indian women. In this case, Godard would be positioned as an

outsider. Yet even this positioning would refer at the same time to her social privilege in not being a member of the minority-group, Indian women, thus compromising what could otherwise be a salutary experience for majority-group women in being made to feel outsiders within, and intruders upon, the discursive situation. However, for reasons not only of the fact of the distribution of Cuthand's discussion in publication, but also of other features of the language she employs, another reading is more useful in discerning the ambivalences of discursive strategy and power when Native women speak the Truth to and for non-Indian women.

Assuming that Godard is addressed by a collective subject -- 'we Indian women' -- then in one sense she is outside that discourse, but in another, she is vital to its constitution as truth. She is (over)hearing something which functions as a racial *confession*, a point reinforced by the admission by Cuthand, as the confessing subject, of a position of ethical responsibility, and an avowed project of (racial) redemption or salvation. Both of these evoke the religious context and epistemology of the confession. On the former point, Cuthand declares, "we feel we have a responsibility to encourage as many Indian people as possible to write,"<sup>27</sup> and that "we have a responsibility to be honest, to transmit our understanding of the world to other people." Indeed, this responsibility is described as "much more than what could be termed the artist's." On the latter point, she characterises such writing as "a healing process" in which "thousands of Indian people [are] involved . . . in becoming whole, complete human beings again."<sup>28</sup> Foucault has described the relationship of the conventional forms of the confession to the production of truth.<sup>29</sup> However, he explains that

The confession is a ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement; it is also a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence (or the virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and *appreciates* it.<sup>30</sup>

Clearly, Cuthand's discourse conforms with the description of the speaking subject who is also the subject of the statement, but crucially, Godard's position in relation to that discourse can be seen to have shifted from relative powerlessness within the discursive context, as represented by her, to being precisely the more powerful participant. As Foucault argues, "the agency of domination does not reside in the one who speaks (for it is [s]he who is constrained), but in the one who listens and says nothing."<sup>31</sup> With



this in mind, we can return to Jeannette Armstrong's "dilemma" and recognise this very power relation, the institutional incitement of her discourse: "we find ourselves explaining many things; we find ourselves talking in terms that aren't necessary."<sup>32</sup> This can now be understood as another facet of the functioning of confession, whose "veracity is . . . guaranteed by the bond, the basic intimacy in discourse, between the one who speaks and what [s]he is speaking about."<sup>33</sup> As has been shown, this discourse is so intimately connected with the racial selves of the speakers, it could go without saying if it were not for the presence of the outsider for whom it is, or must be, produced. It is indeed the truth of *themselves*, supposedly uncontaminated by external influences.

All that is left to the subjects of the dominant discourse are protestations of sincerity, and 'good' rather than exploitative intentions. However, these too function as 'confessions', and thereby partake of the conventions of truth. Those who have spoken for the Other are prepared to confess their own lack of qualifications to do so in return for the ability to shift the boundaries to incorporate a common ground of experience. Michael King, whose participation in historical research on 'Maori topics' has already been noted, produced his selectively autobiographical *Being Pakeha*, a text largely arising from his perception of the need to 'confess' and thereby to justify this aspect of his career. He explains, in a passage which to some extent has motivated the entire text, that when he came upon Maori phenomena he did not understand, he "set out to learn about them. And in trying to make them comprehensible to myself, I sought to make them intelligible to a wider Pakeha audience. It never occurred to me that to do so might be inappropriate, nor that my presence in this role might eventually be unwelcome."<sup>34</sup> His protestations of innocence and good intentions constitute the 'sincerity' of his confession, locating the grounds for exoneration not in the external domain of the deed and its effects, but the integrity and presence-to-itself of the subjectivity which 'preceded' them. Similarly, Canadian Margery Fee, referring to the tendency of academics to "discuss their ideas without reference to the ideas, opinions and feelings of their 'subjects'" concedes that "I cannot believe that my writing is immune."<sup>35</sup> However, she argues that "to say I can't write about Native writing for fear of automatically and inadvertently oppressing them is to fall for another of those impossible 'choices': shut up or be an oppressor. Silence can be 'oppressive' too. And because of my institutional subject position . . . I can hope to shift the

institutional discourse a little."<sup>36</sup> Therefore, Fee also expresses 'good intentions' in using her privileged position for the Other, without dishonestly denying that privilege or patronisingly deprivileging herself.

Nevertheless, the project of shifting institutional discursive boundaries is an ultimately ambivalent one, even ambiguous, when it is noted that boundaries can be shifted for inclusive and exclusive ends. Specifically, majority-group members, as already argued, may concede discursive ground to the Other while re-defining some of it as 'common territory', or locating and thereby validating the position of their own interests in that common ground. For example, Michael King declares that the Maori presence on the land "has exposed me to concepts . . . which I believe have universal value and application; and it has revealed to me more of life and death . . . than I had encountered in twenty years of purely Pakeha existence./ None of which makes me Maori. . . . [W]hat I have always been interested in is New Zealand history, its Maori *and* Pakeha components."<sup>37</sup> Claudia Orange, another Pakeha New Zealand historian, is described as "[t]hus far in her career . . . not [having] encountered any hostility from Maori who might see her as an academic poaching in Maori territory."<sup>38</sup> Orange explains, "'That's because I am not dealing with Maori history *per se* but with the relationship between the two races."<sup>39</sup> In a similar vein, Australian Sue Thomas justifies her 'right' to engage with Aboriginal writing, arguing that despite the existence of areas of black experience which have been closed to whites, traditions kept 'secret', "the usually brutal and sorry history of contact between European and black Australians has been a shared one. . . . Black Australian literature speaks, then, to significant areas of common experience."<sup>40</sup>

There is therefore the danger that the specific difference of the Other will be lost, subsumed under 'common' concerns. However, there are further potential dangers in the majority-group member's adherence to such middle ground. Claudia Orange's explanation of her own position continues: "As one of the parties to the treaty [of Waitangi] I'm trying to make sense of it from both points of view, acknowledging that I can't cover the Maori point of view adequately. That's for Maori to do. I would never set myself up as an authority there."<sup>41</sup> She therefore cannot avoid dealing with 'Maori' history, and is left only with admissions of the inadequacy of her attempts, and her ethical declaration of innocence of exploitative or appropriative intentions. Nevertheless, the basis of her

assurance, like King's, is in her supposedly controlling subjectivity, while the meaning of her discourse can not be so contained. The likelihood that she would be read, particularly by non-Maori, as an authority, is increased by her institutional position and credibility to non-Maori, their susceptibility to accounts 'familiarised' by Pakeha academic and textual conventions, and perhaps even the truth-effect of the 'confessional' tone of her disavowal of authority. In the Canadian context, the point has been expressed that "Often . . . [non-Indian people] are only willing to listen to the frivolous kinds of things that turn them on as intellectuals at universities, and they're not willing to listen to the real true understanding that we as Indian people have."<sup>42</sup> However, the point is less one of truth or falsity/frivolity (although what constitutes the privileged, 'real true' nature of knowledge and understanding that the post-colonised claim will be examined further into the chapter), or even careful versus limited scholarship, but rather the inevitability of different points of view, not simply selectively represented, but represented in accordance with, and by way of, differential access to the culturally dominant institutions and textual forms of authority. As Armstrong argues, "when we start writing . . . we find that the way people perceive what we write becomes transferred into the dominant cultural mode."<sup>43</sup>

Is this inevitable, or can such limits be overcome? How can an oppositional discourse avoid being co-opted by what it challenges? Sue Thomas posits the solution of 'situated' readings when she points out that

When black Australian literature enters the public realm it serves many constituencies. In the context of Aboriginal nationalism, it bears witness to Aboriginality, raising the consciousness of Aboriginals; for European Australians and those from other cultures it can occasion reflection on and criticism of the history of imperialism and neo-colonialism in racial politics and universalising in literary criticism.<sup>44</sup>

While the notion of 'constituencies' politically and administratively situates readers and acknowledges the fundamental principle of discourse that it is not its words alone, but its situation which confers its always various possibilities of meaning, the ideal posited by Thomas is subject to a more complex construction of (divided) subjectivities and 'interests' in late twentieth century settler post-colonialism. Following histories of oppression on the basis of race, and even policies of assimilation to annihilate racial difference, an 'indigenous consciousness' or reading

position may be just as likely to be resisted by those post-colonised whose resistance to racial oppression has been founded upon disidentification with its basic term. This is not to say that such disidentification is necessarily completely 'successful' since one is conferred with subjectivity in the field -- by the gaze -- of the Other; such disidentification may therefore produce a radically split subject whose interests irreconcilably conflict. At the same time, while what is offered the indigenous subject in Thomas's formulation is a new and redemptive 'consciousness', and what is offered the post-coloniser is a legacy of guilt and grounds for a fundamental critique of institutional and cultural practices, then whatever the justification for, and merit of, the latter, the former will be seen by some post-colonisers as the more attractive reading (pro)position. It will therefore be susceptible to re-colonisation, as the post-colonising subject opts for a reconstructed self on the terms apparently proffered by post-colonised literary discourse, rather than accepting the challenge of self-critique. In short, the reading and writing position of the post-colonised is subject to appropriation.

#### 4. III. Authenticating the Author.

This raises further questions of discursive constituencies and the politics of representation: who may speak with authority, and who may speak *as Other*. During the 1980s, a decade securely within the set of social and discursive conditions posited in this thesis as characteristic of the 'post-colonial', there have been debates within the literary and cultural communities of Australia, Canada and New Zealand regarding the politically appropriate membership of, and production of discourse from within, social and cultural categories of Otherness. Godard states that recently

The question of the right to represent individuals or topics belonging to a minority culture has been a contentious issue in Canadian literary circles. . . . It was over just this problem that Women's Press in Toronto split into two groups over an anthology which included narratives about minority groups . . . written by white Canadian women.<sup>45</sup>

Similarly, there have been two literary-political 'cases' in Australia and New Zealand, centred on questions of textual authenticity through the authorial figures of B[anumbir] Wongar and Keri Hulme. Both illustrate the obsession with the 'credentials' of the authors as to some extent

having (dis)placed the texts themselves, or at least supporting readings of the text through the figure of the 'author'. However, this is less of a forgetfulness than a problematisation of contemporary criticism's refusal to "reestablish the ties between an author and his work or to reconstitute an author's thought and experience through his works,"<sup>46</sup> in the light of critical concern in post-colonial cultures with the questions of speaking *rights* and speaking *positions*. That these are *political* rather than essentialist questions of individual 'talent' is suggested for example by Gunew's statement that "In general terms, overseas, 'Wongar's' texts appear to be received as the voice of Aboriginal Australia,"<sup>47</sup> and an entry in Goodwin's *A History of Australian Literature* which stated that "there was . . . a misconception for some time that he was an Aboriginal."<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the question of whether the 'voice' was 'convincing' as such is only raised on Australia's politicised post-colonial literary terrain, and primarily as a territorial rather than an 'artistic' question. Similarly, the controversy and debate over Keri Hulme's *The Bone People*<sup>49</sup> is one divided between those who find the text profoundly credible, albeit on a variety of sometimes contradictory terms, and those who question and even reject its -- largely by way of Hulme's -- credibility, or more precisely again, credentials.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, the terms and the strength of the acclamation it has received demand a certain courage of dissenting voices, as subsequent discussion will demonstrate. Further, the use of the term 'case' provides an entry into an extended analogy with legal questions and concepts, which themselves invoke fundamentally theological principles and practices. As will be shown, questions of authorial and textual legitimacy/illegitimacy are debated in terms which include accusation, evidence, confession, witness, and judgement. There are important differences between the 'cases' of B. Wongar and Keri Hulme. Nevertheless, considered together and in comparison, they raise a range of issues of critical literary and political concern in the settler post-colonial context.

Wongar was discovered also -- as opposed to 'really' -- to be Sreten Bozic, a Yugoslavian who appears to have been a trained anthropologist.<sup>51</sup> As Foucault has shown in his discussion of the author-function, and the functioning of the name of the author in relation to a text or group of texts, the names Bozic and Wongar are not isomorphic and do not serve the same function;<sup>52</sup> Bozic cannot be substituted for Wongar, and certainly not in the name of Truth. Bozic refers to the individual in his civic status,

including in his profession as an anthropologist, and signifies his Yugoslavian ethnicity. On the other hand, Wongar is the name which, through its specificity and its link of that specificity to the author-function, groups together a number of texts, and ties them to this name. In that way, Wongar is the name of the author; it is only 'fictional' in relation to his civic status. The problem however cannot lie simply in the use of another name which describes him as author and describes the collectivity of his works: this has been common practice. Instead, it is in his adoption of an 'Aboriginal' name, an adoption which cannot be regarded simply as a 'choice', as presumably the name 'Stipe Bozic' would have been, (although if he had chosen 'Miroslav Holub', for example, he again would have chosen a name of other than purely denotative value), but as an 'appropriation'. In terms of a discursively privileged status of Aboriginal identity in post-colonial Australia, an Aboriginal name has the value and the status of property, and even invokes a kind of propriety as it names indigeneity. However, Wongar has been argued to be an *improper* name. The authenticity of the name itself, which "translates roughly as 'messenger from the spirit world,'" has been questioned not only on grounds of "sacrilege,"<sup>53</sup> but also on grounds that it reinforces the author as "*false god*[]. The text becomes fixed . . . by the improper name of the author and is declared illegitimate by a series of displacements."<sup>54</sup> His (adoption of an) 'Aboriginal' name is therefore 'read' (in relation to one set of intertexts) first as *signifying* his 'Aboriginality', then (in relation to another set of intertexts) as a *claim* to 'Aboriginality', which in the contemporary post-colonial context is an act of 'indigenisation' whose meaning lies in the appropriation of an authentic belonging to place.

However, although Wongar, the name attached to the author-function, is not a 'fiction', this does not mean that there have not been fictionalisations of an identity for the name of Wongar. Indeed that there have been is illustration of the perceived need to fix something essentially textual into something static and denotative. For example, an article entitled "Solved: The Great B. Wongar Mystery" which appeared in the *Bulletin Literary Supplement* suggests that Wongar emerged into the literary world already as a mystery to be solved, as presumably would any authorial name to which it could not fix an identity. Yet the proliferation of identities under the name of Wongar subverts this very project, ultimately preserving its textual status. Indeed, quite apart from the reference to the "Wongar Mystery," suggesting its literary origin, Wongar

has been described as a "creation," as "a sort of living novel," comprising "layer upon layer of myth, ideas, evasions, truths and identity, variations."<sup>55</sup> Further, as Gelder explains, "He wasn't always represented as an Aborigine" and in a foreword to Wongar's *The Sinners: Stories from Vietnam* (1972), Alan Marshall, with whom as Sreten Bozic he produced *Aboriginal Myths* (1972), "noted that B. Wongar was 'the pen name of a young American of Negro-white blood who served in the American army in Vietnam. He fled to the bush when on leave in Australia and made north, where his colour and features were similar to those of the Aborigines.'"<sup>56</sup> However, as well as the constellation of intertexts which have also produced him as Sreten Bozic, Yugoslavian immigrant anthropologist who has assumed anything from merely an 'Aboriginal' name to an 'Aboriginal' identity, a more recent source cites him as having grown up in Yugoslavia, but also as claiming Aboriginal descent and having spent many years living a tribal existence.<sup>57</sup>

By contrast, 'Keri Hulme' names both the author of *The Bone People* (and other texts although it is the novel which has focussed the particular issues relevant here) and a 'civic' identity, whose increasingly familiar private and public personae have, in different but related ways, been 'read', and 'read into' her novel. Her 'case', however, has less to do with the propriety of her name as such than the way in which that name has been inhabited; it is not a question of whether she really is Keri Hulme, or someone else, but of the truth of the identity named Keri Hulme. Specifically, while she possesses Maori (Kai Tahu) ancestry, or Maori 'blood', and explicitly and consistently identifies *as* Maori, the debate has centred on her 'right' to do so. By (ideological) extension, this is held to determine the credibility of her text as either a 'Maori' or a 'New Zealand' novel. Merata Mita describes *The Bone People* as a novel "written by a Maori woman,"<sup>58</sup> as does Judith Dale,<sup>59</sup> while Stead points out "Of Keri Hulme's eight great-grandparents one only was Maori." For Stead, this is insufficient to make her truly Maori. Further, he argues, she was not brought up speaking the Maori language, although "like many Pakeha New Zealanders she has acquired some in adult life." Although this indicates, for Stead, the inauthenticity of 'secondary socialisation', rendering her "uses of Maori language and mythology . . . willed, self-conscious, not inevitable, not entirely authentic,"<sup>60</sup> it could be argued at least that it constitutes, as does Wongar's learning of Aboriginal language, what Spivak describes as an act of 'deprivileging', learning the language of

the oppressed, which challenges the "sanctioned ignorance" of imperialism.<sup>61</sup> Although I would argue that such a gesture in post-colonial Australia, Canada and New Zealand is more likely to *increase* the privilege of the post-coloniser, and in no way determines that the post-colonising subject will experience the real -- economic, legal, social -- conditions of racial oppression, this is quite different from the question of whether a language was acquired from infancy or in adulthood. For example, Fee acknowledges the validity of Stead's suspicions of what could amount to 'advantageous identifications' by post-colonisers with the post-colonised for the sake of the apparent privileges of political and cultural 'affirmative action'. However, she demonstrates greater sensitivity to the racial, cultural and linguistic ambiguities of the settler post-colonial context. Fee argues that the debates over percentages of indigenous or minority-race 'blood' are in fact more complex than Stead (among others) admits.<sup>62</sup> Her argument takes account of the social dislocations effected by colonialism and settler-dominated nationalism which resulted, for indigenous populations, in mixed ancestry, generations raised in (politically determined) ignorance of their ancestry or cultural traditions, and the related predominance of those whose first language is English. She further points out that Stead performs a curious reversal of the traditional grounds of discursive disqualification: "The smallest amount of 'impure' blood has frequently been enough to disqualify minority group members from acceptance by the majority. Now, the argument is turned around on Hulme: unless she has more Maori blood, she can't speak as one."<sup>63</sup> She cites Colette Guillaumin's argument regarding the distinction and definition of minority and majority group membership. Guillaumin points out that "the membership of a majority is based on the latitude to deny that one belongs to a minority. It is conceived as a freedom in the definition of oneself, a freedom which is never granted to members of minorities, and which they are not in a position to give themselves."<sup>64</sup> Consistent with this point, Fee argues that "One could dismiss Stead's attempt to determine whether Hulme qualifies as Maori quite quickly: to impose a definition from outside the minority is in itself oppressive."<sup>65</sup> Thus Fee points to the oppressive gesture of moving from the raising of such issues and dangers to the imposition, or denial, of an identity from the outside.

Wongar and Hulme are each responsible for a different degree of complicity in the reader's conflation of the author as writing subject with



the 'identity' of the text, and the implicit claims to something approaching autobiographical authenticity. Gunew has outlined Wongar's subtle textual disclaimers, citing epigraphs, a glossary, and a preface which variously function to position him as a "tribal outsider," and his texts as "an imaginative impersonation [which] . . . does not purport to be an unmediated first-person account, the unproblematic account of a native informant."<sup>66</sup> However, although biographical information about Wongar is sparse and contradictory, the claim to Aboriginal descent and tribal existence cited above is one of the more explicit and complicit confections of name with identity. Keri Hulme has been arguably more clearly and consistently complicit with an author-centred reading of her novel, so that doubts about her authenticity reflect upon the text.<sup>67</sup> Despite her disclaimers, the choice of the protagonist's name, Kerewin Holmes, and her physical description so strongly evoking Hulme's own appearance, one which the media attention surrounding the novel made increasingly familiar to the general reader, have clearly constituted too strong a temptation to such a reading. For example, one commentator describes Hulme on appearance as "surprisingly small," and admits that "I find the urge to scan her for traces of Kerewin Holmes, the Amazonian hero . . . is irresistible," along with the more general observation that "People expect Hulme to be a sort of West Coast wild woman with the soul of an artist and the muscle of an all-in wrestler. And surely Hulme's personal style nudges the myth along a little?"<sup>68</sup> Further, as Stead has pointed out, Kerewin Holmes's admission of her sexual 'neutrality' closely echoes a statement Hulme made about herself in a television interview.<sup>69</sup> Confronted with the perceived similarities, Hulme provides evidence of differences, but also admits to some similarities between herself and Kerewin Holmes.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, the weighted terms of 'evidence' and 'admission' are intended here to evoke the very different values attached to either identification or disidentification, values determined by the perceived authenticity of her (self-)representation. However, it would be possible to 'read' similarities as simply these: areas in which Hulme is *like* Holmes, rather than concluding that Hulme *is* Holmes, or vice versa. Nevertheless, political and cultural agendas clearly determine the terms in which such questions of interpretation are addressed. Further, even within the agenda of cultural authenticity, Hulme's complicity consists in the employment of seductive interpretive terminology: in the Preface to *The Bone People*, she celebrates the relative success she had in preserving

the text from editorial intervention, claiming "The voice of the author won through."<sup>71</sup>

Wongar's literary community, and his position within it is somewhat different from those of Hulme. There is a stronger discourse of multiculturalism in Australia than in New Zealand, which is more concerned with the politics of bi-culturalism. As Bozic, a Yugoslavian immigrant, had he written *as one*, he would undoubtedly have been conferred with the ambivalent Otherness to the dominant Anglo-Australian culture which would have granted him a position from which to speak, even as it positioned his discourse within dominant constructions and exclusions of that very definition as 'migrant writer'. Thus he -- or more correctly, but inadmissably, his institutionally and textually mediated discourse -- would have broken through the silence by which "migrants, like women, have signalled their oppression."<sup>72</sup> Indeed, the fact that he did *not* inhabit this pre-constituted subject-position, within which he could have been both heard and contained, could be argued to have transgressed dominant phonocentric critical assumptions about the necessity and inevitability of the Other speaking as (her/his *proper*) Other. Bozic, under such a dispensation, did not speak as Other: instead, he *wrote* as (another) Other, in terms of similarly phonocentric assumptions that, on the one hand, migrant writers speak their own experience in forms which function either as sociology or as oral history,<sup>73</sup> and on the other, that writing is fundamentally unreliable, even dishonest. Thus he is implicitly charged with failing to speak as a 'Yugoslavian immigrant'. However, in a literary discursive formation marked, as Sneja Gunew notes, by its tendency to conflate Aboriginal writing with 'ethnic' writing,<sup>74</sup> it is relevant to consider why this apparently sanctioned step 'sideways' should have aroused the level of debate that it did. Part of the answer is undoubtedly that the post-colonial cultural context has been witness to an increasing intolerance of discourses and institutional practices which fail to accord priority status to First Peoples, while its 'multi-cultural' moment rejects the construction of the monolithic Other.<sup>75</sup> However, another part of the answer may lie in further 'biographical information' about Wongar himself. As already mentioned, as Sreten Bozic he is apparently a trained anthropologist. While as 'Bozic the immigrant' he would be conferred with another Otherness, as an anthropologist he is situated within a profession which has been complicit with the perpetuation of colonial discourse. In addition, his professional status is differentiated from the

'authenticity' of experience in much the same way that writing is differentiated from speech, as a mediated phenomenon. Therefore, Bozic is further charged with fraudulently 'speaking as' an Aboriginal.

Keri Hulme's position within a cultural context in which bi-culturalism is the more usual discourse of racial politics, is apparently less complex: either she is Maori, or she is Pakeha 'cashing in' on the currently perceived advantages of Maori 'identification'.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, this is the specific charge brought by C.K. Stead, who states he believes that "*The bone people* . . . is a novel by a Pakeha which has won an award intended for a Maori."<sup>77</sup> However, the structuralist notions underpinning this positing of a simple Maori-Pakeha opposition of discrete terms generate an analysis whose limitations have already been demonstrated, both in relation to post-colonial hybridity and perhaps more fundamentally the problematisation of the unified subject of/in discourse. That the latter does not constitute an idealist position divorced from questions of power and the politics of discourse is already clear in the very existence of these cases of uncertain discursive positionality. In addition, the concern over possible 'cashing in' constitutes a further area of commonality between Hulme and Wongar: the question of financial gain from their writing appears to have intensified the outrage of those who consider their indentifications fraudulent. Gunew cites the title of one review of Wongar's work: "'B. Wongar Publishes Ferocious Fable, Collects \$25,000,'" and explains that "The allusion is to a senior writer's grant from the Literature Board."<sup>78</sup> Certainly Hulme, like Wongar, has access to another Otherness as a woman, an identification which in itself has not been contested, although her 'typicality' or *representativeness* certainly has been debated.<sup>79</sup> Wongar wrote *Walg* from a female point of view, an act which, whether it produced a 'credible' text or not is described by Gunew as a "male intervention". She goes on to identify "male emphases" which overlay the representation of 'female' concerns.<sup>80</sup> However, although whether Keri Hulme is a feminist, and whether *The Bone People* is a feminist novel, has been of some interest, the focus of concern about Hulme, a concern which has influenced and even determined readings of her novel, is the authenticity of her racial identification, something whose uncertainties and complexities are exacerbated in settler post-colonial societies. As has been shown, the issue of whether or not she can *write* as Maori has been obscured by the factors which have caused the reader to conflate the author and her text into a unified act of expression. Therefore,

Keri Hulme and *The Bone People* have become the ground upon which politically urgent cultural crises are being played out.

There are significant relationships between 'readings' of Wongar and Hulme, and readings of their texts. Gunew draws associations between overseas, that is non-Australian, the reception of B. Wongar's texts outside of the debate over his "biographical credentials,"<sup>81</sup> and their conferred status as "the voice of Aboriginal Australia,"<sup>82</sup> accompanied by approbatory recognition of their themes of uranium mining and radioactive pollution, colonial oppression and racial politics. She contrasts this with their Australian reception where "one barely sees any reviews of the texts."<sup>83</sup> Whether or not this relates to anything about the texts themselves, or whether it is a reflection of different cultural priorities, will shortly be discussed. However, one reading of his texts is produced very much through a reading of Wongar himself. In Gelder's analysis of the novel, *The Trackers* (1975) and the collection of stories, *The Track to Bralgu* (1978) he finds, through the metamorphoses in characters' identities, Wongar's fictionalisation of "the construction of his *own* fictionality" which Gelder similarly discusses as a series of metamorphoses (implying for example that Wongar has *replaced* Bozic).<sup>84</sup> There is the suggestion, then, that Wongar 'metamorphosed' in order to write about characters who metamorphose, or perhaps that he has been unintentionally sentenced repeatedly to play out his own actions in fiction. As well as pointing to other works with 'Wongar variants', and the observation that Wongar's name has its "mythicality built into" *Walg*, however, Gelder argues that "in spite of his pseudonym, the completeness of his own apparent Aboriginality is never actually manifested. His fiction is . . . littered with characters whose identities are in fact incomplete." This then contributes to the judgement that "there is no attempt at deceit here, at least."<sup>85</sup>

The terms of the debate over *The Bone People* are more clearly drawn. Opinion is divided over whether or not *The Bone People* is a Maori novel, as are the grounds upon which such a judgement is made. Elizabeth Webby refers to its "Maoriness,"<sup>86</sup> while Merata Mita, clear that it is a novel by a Maori woman, states that "Certainly *The Bone People* cannot be characterised as a Maori novel," emphasising as the reason that "*any true Maori literature must be written in the Maori language.*"<sup>87</sup> Stead similarly denies its status as a Maori novel (another reason why it? Hulme? should not have won the Pegasus Prize for Maori Literature) on grounds of

language, adding the observation that "For the present . . . all Maori writers of any consequence write in English,"<sup>88</sup> and thereby conceding the possibility of a 'Maori writer' writing in a language other than Maori, so that Hulme's Maoriness is indeed not dependent upon her speaking or writing *in* Maori. However, Stead adds that *The Bone People* is not a Maori novel, and did not warrant consideration for the Pegasus Prize for reasons of literary form. In order to have been 'Maori writing', Stead argues, "the form required would need to have been one of those belonging to an oral tradition -- poetry, songs, laments, or some re-telling of local myth or legend." He finds it "hard to see why poetry should have been excluded, since poetry is something which exists in the Maori tradition, while the novel, obviously, does not." Indeed, it is given the failure of the novel to conform in language and form to his notion of Maori writing -- one which is firmly rooted in the static adherence to (imitations of) traditions of the past -- that he shifts his focus to the "racial antecedents of the *authors*" as the determinant of 'Maoriness'. Further, having repudiated the Maoriness of both *The Bone People*, and Keri Hulme, he has cleared the ground in order to proceed to apply traditional, universalistic literary criteria in his reading of the novel, finding unacceptable the points at which it takes "a dive from reality into wishful daydream," and worse, the events in the fourth section which when read "either as Maori lore or as fiction" he found "almost totally spurious."<sup>89</sup>

Before examining responses to the issues raised by these points of view, it is also necessary to examine divided opinion on whether *The Bone People* is a 'New Zealand' novel, a question inevitably tied to both the authenticity, and the authority, of the author. No-one has denied that Keri Hulme is a New Zealander, although one reviewer posited an analogy between Hulme and her protagonist, Kerewin Holmes, whom the reviewer found ludicrously un-representative of her nationality (or her gender).<sup>90</sup> Implicitly by extension, she asserted that "Whatever else *The Bone People* is, it has no claims to be taken seriously as a New Zealand novel . . . . This West Coast phantasmagoria is staggeringly far from the reality of anyone's real world."<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, Merata Mita describes it as "the first *real* New Zealand novel . . . in that it truly represents New Zealand society with its schizophrenic oscillation between the obsessive individualisation of the Pakeha world and the historical and spiritual consciousness of the Maori world."<sup>92</sup> Stead, in a statement which is implicitly critical of the author-centred review he goes on to produce

himself, refers to the two *New Zealand Listener* reviews which "told her she had spoken for us all, or for all women, or all Maoris,"<sup>93</sup> his tone and the implications of his qualifiers apparently dismissive of the larger claim.

Origins, whether those of the author or those of the text, and the relationship between these, are clearly a problematic issue. They are also profoundly political. This raises the *politics* of the concern with authorial, and through the figure of the author, textual origins. Gunew suggests of Wongar's texts that "It may be that a concern with origins, the paternity of the text, may well in this case be invoked in order to curtail potentially embarrassing political meanings,"<sup>94</sup> and here one is reminded of a facet of the 'author-function' described by Foucault, specifically the observation that "Speeches and books were assigned real authors . . . only when the author became subject to punishment and to the extent that his discourse was considered transgressive."<sup>95</sup> In the case of Wongar this suggests that if Wongar himself can be discredited, then by extension so is his discourse discredited and consigned to marginalisation. Fee makes precisely this point with regard to Stead's reading of Hulme as Pakeha: "To label her Pakeha discredits her vision, marginalizes her message, and buries her in a tradition that can safely contain her."<sup>96</sup> Wongar has claimed that "his work had been blacklisted because of a photographic exhibition concerning the impact of mining on Arnhem Land Aborigines which he had organised in 1974 and which had been cancelled."<sup>97</sup> Claims of 'victimisation' have also been made for *The Bone People*. Elizabeth Webby, describing the search for a publisher for the novel, suggests that "the book's length and, one suspects, its feminism as well as its Maoriness, went against it." Specifically, for example, she asserts that the Advisory Committee on Women "thought the novel did not give a positive enough image of women, especially Maori women. . . [and] turned it down."<sup>98</sup> Merata Mita posits the novel's uncomfortable representation through the characters of Joe, Kerewin, and Simon, of New Zealand's collective psyche as a factor in its reception: "New Zealand's deepest, darkest secret is its history of violence, subsequent repression and the damage it is doing to us as a nation."<sup>99</sup>

On the other hand, some critics have argued that the political climate into, or out of which *The Bone People* emerged, has worked in the novel's favour. Judith Dale suggests that "The initial success might have been a matter of timing since by the middle nineteen-eighties sensitivity to

racism and sexism in Aotearoa could mean that we were ready for it,"<sup>100</sup> although she goes on to concede that this alone could not have accounted for its acclaim. Stead less generously refers to reception of the novel as "a babble of excited voices" and asserts that *The Bone People* touches a number of currently, or fashionably sensitive nerves. New Zealand intellectual life . . . has been lately lacerating itself into consciousness that racism and sexism exist. Where they do not, zealots nonetheless find them."<sup>101</sup> Perhaps the most antagonistic view is that of the reviewer who describes the novel as "a frightening tribute to the power and determination of the women's movement which, through the Spiral Collective, adopted and promoted it in New Zealand and overseas."<sup>102</sup>

Nevertheless, while claims of the political promotion of the novel to some extent undermine its status and success as the product of a 'creative' or literary act, claims of its political victimisation actually function to enhance this. Certainly, "Bits of mythology have begun to form around the book,"<sup>103</sup> however Stead proceeds to dismantle such myths, understood as 'falsehoods' or 'misconceptions', largely by the invocation of his own status (which apparently allows him to base arguments on what he believes he can "recall" from early reviews of the novel rather than checking these sources again), and his inside, or intrinsically more reliable knowledge, such that he begins arguments with the phrases "For the record let it be said first", and "It should also be said that."<sup>104</sup> However, rather than attempting to 'set the record straight', and certainly rather than *denying* that such a body of mythology has formed, it is more useful to analyse the functioning of those 'myths', understood as bodies of knowledge whose meaning and truth lie less in what they say than the 'necessity' of what they accomplish or explain. This mythology circulates around both the processes of writing and of publication.

Hulme has herself participated in this myth-making; indeed, it could be argued that she is in a privileged position to do so. In her "Preface to the First Edition: Standards in a non-standard Book," she evokes the development of the book as something organic, something which 'grew' according to its own inner energies, Hulme herself in the thrall of this process: "*The Bone People* began life as a short-story called "Simon Peter's Shell". . . ./"Simon Peter's Shell" began to warp into a novel. The characters wouldn't go away. They took 12 years to reach this shape." In fact, the novel is given something like a female genealogy, as both lack of

'authority' and the privileged experiential epistemology of amateurism, and labour (associating work and childbirth), are evoked in her statement that "I typed it out on my first typewriter, nights after working in the Motueka tobacco fields." Continuity of a line is suggested in the fact that "The typewriter was a present for my 18th birthday from my mother."<sup>105</sup> However, Hulme also tells the reader that "the first three publishers turned it down on the grounds, among others, that it was too large, too unwieldy, too different when compared with the normal shape of novel." Therefore, like the woman's body in patriarchy, it is judged for its shape. To the extent that a post-colonial intellectual culture flatters itself that it celebrates rather than suppresses difference, this stands as something of an indictment, such that the fact of the novel's eventual appearance is cause for celebration of its triumph over 'political' suppression. Indeed, Hulme follows with the triumphant "Enter, to sound of trumpets and cowrieshell rattles, the Spiral Collective."<sup>106</sup> Similarly, to return to statements made by Elizabeth Webby, describing the search for a publisher for the novel, she argues, as we have seen that its length, its feminism, and its Maoriness "went against it,"<sup>107</sup> thus by implication pitting the novel against the forces of institutionalised convention, sexism, and racism. Stead's description of these publishers places a different emphasis on the matter, encouraging sympathy for the "commercial publisher who was anxious about the novel's length and its prospects in the marketplace," and even trying to undermine the suggestion of a patriarchal conspiracy by pointing out that another was "*a woman publisher* who thought the book needed more work before it was ready for publication."<sup>108</sup> Further, as has been stated, the Advisory Committee on Women's reception of it was founded upon what in current feminist literary circles would be understood as a naive emphasis on the value of positive images as a principle of evaluation of the novel's feminism. This point of Webby's places somewhat different light upon Stead's claim that "of one of the three [publishers] who were offered the novel before Spiral saw it, one was a feminist who thought it insufficiently feminist for her list."<sup>109</sup> However, even when the novel found a publisher, the feminist Spiral Collective, the process, according to Webby's description, is an odyssey of struggle and commitment: "The collective now searched for the cheapest quotes on typesetting, printing and binding. Typesetting was done by the Victoria University Students' Association; proofreading and pasting-up by the members of the collective, often at night when their other commitments were over."<sup>110</sup> Such



dedication must surely render Stead's opinion that Spiral "produced a book as badly edited, printed, and proof-read as any I have seen, mismanaged in its finances,"<sup>111</sup> insensitive, even callous. But to understand the force of Webby's mythologising, one needs to examine its specific terms and the assumptions to which it appeals.

The 'authenticity of the amateur' has already been alluded to with regard to the phonocentric privileging of 'experiential' as opposed to textual or professional knowledge. Related, but more specific is the construction of 'truth' and 'authenticity' through what Foucault has described as the "repressive hypothesis." If the institutionalised literary conventions and the judgements of the publishing industry are held to represent agencies of domination -- the law --, then what Foucault terms the "speaker's benefit"<sup>112</sup> of the repressive hypothesis for those describing the process through which *The Bone People* came to be published, can be illustrated. Substituting 'publication', meaning the alternative publication of a 'transgressive' text, for Foucault's 'sex':

If [publication] is repressed, that is, condemned to prohibition, nonexistence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is [achieving] it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. A person who [achieves such publication] places himself to a certain extent outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom.<sup>113</sup>

According to the repressive hypothesis, the fact of the novel's repression means that its 'subjective' demand to surface constitutes it as something like a 'confession', traditionally positioned as the liberating (of truth) counterpart to repressive 'power': "Confession frees, but power reduces one to silence; truth does not belong to the order of power but shares an original affinity with freedom."<sup>114</sup> Further, the 'truth' of the confession lies not simply in the fact of its production but in the *difficulty* of its production, its production out of *struggle*: "One goes about telling, with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell . . . [One produces] a literature ordered according to the infinite task of extracting from the depths of oneself, in between the words, a truth which the very form of the confession holds out like a shimmering mirage."<sup>115</sup> The full force of the truth of confession is its putative status as *expression*: out of the depths of the creative subject has come the plenitude of the inalienable, *spoken* word. Out of the depths of New Zealand's literary and publishing institutional psyche, one reads, has emerged that which could not be

admitted, the shadowy Other, *The Bone People*. The shadowy Other of *The Bone People*. The fact of its emergence into literary-national consciousness of course must be recognised as having removed it from the discourse of the Other -- the literary-institutional unconscious -- into its symptomatic form as an embodiment of resistance. However, this will be the basis of the discussion of the novel itself in the next chapter. Of significance at this point is the implication of the confession-expression analogy for the location of power.

As was pointed out in discussion of the response to Canadian Native women's writing, Foucault located power in the confessional relation less with the confessing subject 'unburdening' herself than with the interlocutor who confers it with truth. Analogously, one could argue that the 'authenticity' of *The Bone People* is conferred by those readers/critics who participate in its construction as confession-expression; who, in other words, find in it the voice of the author. At this point, and in the wake of the uncertainties and anxieties underpinning origins in (relation to) the novel, we are pointed to what Gunew terms "destinations," or "the birth of the reader."<sup>116</sup> Further, it is through the figure of the reader that the author can be substituted by Foucault's "author-function." If the author is the "principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning,"<sup>117</sup> and is further "the ideological figure by which one masks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning,"<sup>118</sup> then what of the reader? As has been shown, it is through *readings* of the texts of both Wongar and Hulme that the variant meanings have been produced. Taken as the idealist category posited by Barthes, the reader who is "'without history, biography, psychology,'"<sup>119</sup> this reader is the source of the proliferation of meanings, allowing the 'different' meanings which, for example, constitute the settler post-colonial culture to emerge and be celebrated: nationality, race, class, gender, sexuality, renovated nationalism. Conversely, even the post-colonial valorisation of 'difference' cannot tolerate ungrounded *différance*. Thus the reader also functions as the "necessary or constraining figure"<sup>120</sup> through which fictional discourse must pass, and this is the reader *with* history, biography, psychology. Under post-colonialism's historicising dispensation, the reader confesses her subjectivity in terms of the development of a "confessional science"<sup>121</sup> which integrated with the juridico-religious model of confession, a "science of the subject" which investigated "the validity of introspection, lived experience as evidence, or the presence of consciousness to itself"<sup>122</sup> as they related to the functioning

of truth. Thus Judith Dale cannot 'speak' until she has declared "I am a woman, pakeha, middle-class, lesbian, an academic, of Christian background, a teacher, contemporary with the author, resident in Aotearoa, and so on."<sup>123</sup> The reader of this self-declaration is so dazzled by detail that questions of the meaning of 'a woman', 'a pakeha' and so on, and in what manner or with what emphases they unite to produce 'Judith Dale' presumably do not arise. Nor presumably does the question of whether she could have omitted anything 'of significance' from this apparently exhaustive list. Dale has intervened in, or pre-empted, the very process undertaken by the reader who seeks the truth of the author, for as a "certain functional principle" the author "does not precede the works."<sup>124</sup> The author-function

is not formed spontaneously through the simple attribution of a discourse to an individual. It results from a complex operation whose purpose is to construct the rational entity we call an author . . . . [T]hese aspects of an individual, which we designate as an author (or which comprise an individual as an author), are projections, in terms always more or less psychological, of our way of handling texts: in the comparisons we make, the traits we extract as pertinent, the continuities we assign, or the exclusions we practice [sic].<sup>125</sup>

Judith Dale's gesture conflates author and reader, and this arguably because she wishes to clear the ground for her reading/writing of the novel which she 'confesses' is unacceptable to the 'real' author, Hulme. However, she also provides grounds upon which the reader of *her* discourse may evaluate its truth-value with reference to her credibility. The author refuses to die. Similarly, the credibility of Wongar's work overseas has been enhanced by Simone de Beauvoir's associating the themes of *Walg* with French nuclear tests in the Pacific, Alan Paton's Foreword to *The Track to Bralgu*, and the German version's place in a series entitled 'Third World Dialogue.'<sup>126</sup> In other words, if origins can be cast in terms which work against the text, the credibility of the (politically or institutionally positioned) reader may mitigate the fate of the text.

The reader may, of course, also be positioned in order to discredit her/his discourse. In this way, Fee refers to Stead's "reputation and insider knowledge"<sup>127</sup> as by implication dishonest props for his credibility, while Ash specifies "*Pakeha* critics" who question the novel's Maoriness and its representation of Maori spirituality, and argues that "A Maori critic, writing from the inside, may justify such a response, but imposing *pakeha*

value judgements on the novel feels too much like racism."<sup>128</sup> On the one hand, the problems of essentialism -- blood, chromatism, up-bringing, identification -- inherent in such judgements have already been referred to; on the other hand, we are returned in the end to the political question of discursive grounds and discursive appropriation, such that the 'aesthetic' question, 'who can write as Other?' is reformulated to replace notions of ability or talent ('can') with those of political sanction ('may'), and writing, with its unreliable links to origins, with speaking as the inevitable expression of the 'true self'. The question is therefore one of post-colonial discursive territory: in short, 'Who May Speak As Other?'

#### 4. IV. Constructing the Discourse of the Other.

One text which exemplifies many of the points of the preceding discussion is Stevan Eldred-Grigg's *Oracles and Miracles*.<sup>129</sup> Issues of discursive territory or politicised discursive terrain, post-colonial 'value-added discourse', and the politics of representation and literary authority pervade this novel about 1930s and 1940s New Zealand "'daughters of the poor.'"<sup>130</sup> Although the text's problematic position in the intersection of oral history and fiction will be the focus of later discussion, it is useful at this point to invoke Eldred-Grigg's status as an historian to gain access to a self-reflexive statement of his assumptions and *a priori*: "Working class women, in their ways of thinking and doing, lived in a culture older than the world of the industrial economy, older and wiser than capitalism."<sup>131</sup> In the light of this belief, he continues, "As a man, an intellectual man living an upper middle-class life at the fag end of the twentieth century, there would be obvious difficulties in my trying to write about working class women in the 1930s and 1940s."<sup>132</sup> Although a number of ramifications of these statements will be examined throughout the discussion, one point of beginning is the method and implications of his positing of an essential difference, of the order of a *culture*, with regard to these women.

The situating of *Oracles and Miracles* in terms of late twentieth-century post-colonial discourse can best be achieved by reading the novel *against itself*, or at least showing those points at which it is written against itself. In a work derived from the conventions of transcribed oral history, there are two important sites of reading intervention. One is the most recent present of *narrative construction*: those points which situate the discourse

within a discernable point in the subject's material and psychic history, and through which some grounding may be provided for recollections. Secondly, one should look for the latest point of *narrative development*, the point at which the subject considers the account of her life to be complete, thereby suggesting the closure of an episode or the failure of any relevant 'developments' to follow. The notion of the end of an episode is evoked in Fag's reflections on turning twenty-one, toward the end of the novel:

I didn't want to think about the fact that I was turning twenty-one. It seemed too final, irrevocable, being twenty-one. It seemed as though it was the end of something. Definitively the end. As though what I was by the time I got to twenty-one was what I was always going to be, that there weren't going to be any more chances. (247)

This is followed by the image of her life as a movie playing backwards, until "it seemed as though the climax wasn't me at all, that I was just the foetus, the embryo, and that the real person who grew out of me was a skinny little kid smoking dock leaf cigarettes in the back yard at Kent Street" (247). This does indeed encapsulate both the process and the 'meaning' of the novel as transcribed life-story -- for example, the *production* of an *account* of childhood from the distance of the adult present; however, it also reflects a central argument regarding the character of Fag herself, as will be shown, that the *real* Fag was the childhood Fag, while her emergence into adulthood was at the cost of an accompanying inauthenticity.

While the 'latest' point in the narrative *construction* proposes a 'comedic' structure, the structure of narrative *development* is 'tragedic'. The *narrating* present finds Ginnie and Fag, despite the differences between them and the 'loss' of each other at the *narrative* conclusion, having regained enough ground in common to make a text of their juxtaposed narratives possible. Fag remarks that "Ginnie and I often talk about our childhood. Now that we're women ourselves, with houses, husbands, children, mortgages. . . ." (5). However, she also articulates something which exemplifies, even lies at the core of, the narrative in its tragic moment. She explains that Ginnie

hasn't read much, that's her trouble, she doesn't know enough words. When she left school to go to the factory she just stopped looking at words, she just made do with the ones she had and didn't bother to look for any more. But me . . . I'd read brown paper if there

weren't any books. So when I look at the past I can bring more knowhow to the job than Ginnie can. (6)

Ironically, however, the novel posits the failure or 'tragedy' as Fag's rather than Ginnie's, and as suggested in her attitude towards words, it is presented as a condition of alienation, the effects of mediating discourses between these working-class women and the putative non-discursive or extra-discursive 'reality' of their lives.

The positioning of Fag by the narrative is of central importance to understanding its 'argument'. This is most clearly presented in the last sections of the novel, when Fag and her husband Roddie visit Ginnie and her husband Jaz, holidaying at the local motor camp after some time apart. Fag's first impression of Ginnie makes her want to cry: "She looked so poor. Her hair was hacked short like a prisoner, her clothes were threadbare, and on her feet she was wearing a pair of old sandshoes" (259). Fag tells herself that despite her own failure to find real contentment or happiness, to "Count your blessings, forget about the old life, there's nothing there for you. Just look at poor Ginnie./You don't know you're living" (260). However the description of Ginnie echoes an earlier description of women who "gave up the ghost," in that "One year they'd be wearing lipstick and little hats, clicking powder compacts open. Then . . . they'd be shuffling along in dirty sandshoes and their hair would be screwed up under a hairnet" (58). Importantly, these are the familiar neighbourhood women of working-class South Christchurch, so that Ginnie, in her resemblance to them, can be seen as having remained close to her 'origins'.

Ginnie's view of Fag, by contrast, evokes Fag's distance and alienation from her family origins. When Fag arrives at the motor camp, Ginnie recalls, "I could see Fag's face inside, sort of pale and distant./ . . . And she was a stranger. When she stepped out of the car and came across to kiss me, I felt like I was being visited by the royal family" (261). The novel closes with their mutually emotional leave-taking, but with the seal placed firmly on Fag's 'inauthenticity', her status as simulacrum of something that was never 'real':

Fag burst into tears.

'Come and see us again,' she said. 'Come and stay with us.'

And I cried too, but somehow I felt like I was crying cause it was like there wasn't a Fag any more. I felt like I'd lost Fag for ever, that there

wasn't a person there any more, just clothes and money and alcohol. I felt like she'd died.

And all that was left was a cardboard cutout of Princess Elizabeth.  
Or Lauren Bacall. (261-2)

Fag's reduction to the status of cardboard cutout of women from equally culturally remote and yet invasive England (Empire) and America (Hollywood), women whose status is one of 'image' itself, provides the point of entry into the novel's 'intended' meaning. Mum Feron's constant antagonism toward Fag stands as the opposition of 'origins', truth and authenticity, to alienation, falsity and illusion. Ginnie recounts early in the text that "Fag to Mum was like a red rag to a bull. Fag was always 'the cuckoo in the nest,' according to Mum, she was 'the foundling.' Mum really made it sound as though Fag wasn't one of us" (37). The privileged reading of the text is therefore one which centres on and valorises the values represented in their full integrity by Mum Feron, and mostly, though with difficulties which are symptomatic of the disruptions Fag represents, perpetuated by Ginnie. However, I would argue that this is a dangerous reading, and one which is more symptomatic of the anxieties of late capitalist settler post-colonialism, a lament generated and conditioned by Imaginary nostalgia, than the achievement of a 'true' re-creation of a 'lost past'.

4. IV. (i). *The Essential Other*. In *Oracles and Miracles*, Eldred-Grigg posits an essentialised working-class women's culture, whose integrity he respects and wishes to preserve, while lamenting its loss. This can be illustrated by examining the various strategies he employs to evoke such a culture. As language use and specificity is a central defining element of a 'culture', he evokes their culture in the characters' uses of language specific to that period in history and to the activities which are shown to have dominated and thus characterised the women's lives. Indeed, Eldred-Grigg argues that "these women spoke a language that had once been alive and was now nearly dead. I wanted to record and then copy as accurately as possible its shapes and sound."<sup>133</sup> This specificity is conveyed in the use of terms which the late twentieth century reader may find difficult to understand: Mum Feron states, "'This place needs a good lick and a root'" (13); she remembers her sister being told by her own mother to "'Poss those clothes, Millie. . . . Poss them good and proper'" (30); and she inspects Ginnie and Fag's efficiency in cleaning the make-shift toilet, regularly chiding them that they have left it "'half claggered up'" (35).

Significantly, such idiom is defined not only by its belonging to an era which has passed, but by its invariable concern with household cleaning tasks.

Cultures also depend upon transmission from one generation to the next for their survival, and Mum Feron is actively engaged in handing down received wisdoms and myths to the female members of her household in the way which sustains a culture's practices and belief-systems. Mum Feron is a repository of interdictions, usually of the practical household variety: "'Never rub blankets. . . . Rubbing blankets will make them hard'" (48), or similarly, "'Never rinse blankets in cold water, youse girls, if you rinse blankets in cold water they'll *thicken up on the line*'" (48). However, some 'wisdom' is more clearly 'superstitious' in nature: "'Never wash of a New Year's Day. . . . If you wash of a New Year's Day you wash your troubles in for another year'" (47). In such cases the existence of a belief-system itself, uniting its adherents into a continuous 'culture', is posited as taking precedence over the use-value of the information. Yet this does not make adherence any more flexible or any less vehement. Apart from those which focus on an area suggested as of central, almost defining concern to working-class women's lives -- household cleaning -- there are those which concern what will be shown in later discussion to be portrayed as being of similarly dominant centrality to their lives: the (female) body and its various functions. Some of these are familiar and their derivations in the male professionalisation, institutionalisation and imposition of discourses of medicine, psychiatry and nutrition, largely recognisable. Mum Feron, still principally an agent of 'cultural' interdictions, warns Ginnie, "'Don't you *dare* wash your hair when it's that time. . . . If you wash your hair at that time of the month your brain will be turned'" (102). More alarmingly still, she tells her, "'Never drink beef tea when you're having a baby. . . . If you drink beef tea the baby will be so big they'll have to take it out *in parts*'" (223).

Another constitutive or defining feature of a culture is the differentiation and exclusion of non-members, and the concomitant solidification of the sense of belonging for those who practise the exclusions. For example, Fag recollects that "Mum knew that Irish Catholics were dogs, because she'd heard her own mother say the same thing" (46). Similarly, that the novel posits a working-class *women's* culture is underscored by the otherness of males in the Feron household,



and eventually their effective absence from it. This is constructed through their marginalisation in and by the accounts of Ginnie and Fag which largely comprise the narrative. However, marginalisation is not necessarily disadvantage; in a novel which characterises women's lives as having in common an almost relentless harshness and need to struggle for survival, the males of the household are frequently differentiated by privilege. This privilege is regarded as 'natural', reinforcing the concomitant 'naturalness' of the women's position. For example, Ginnie recounts Mum Feron's insistence that "'The men haven't got time for [washing dishes and making beds]'" (35):

'The men have to save their strength for work.'

So we cleaned their shoes and washed their clothes and cut their lunches and all the rest of it. And of a Sunday, after they'd spent the day galumphing round a league pitch or roaring round cinder tracks on their motorbikes, we had to get their muddy boots and scrape them clean with sticks. (36)

Despite the somewhat begrudged privileges allowed the boys, Ginnie explains, betraying a degree of distance from her mother's point of view both in the consciousness of her analysis and in her lexical choice, that "It wasn't that Mum liked the boys any more than us, it was just taken for granted that the boys should have it easy and us girls should be skivvies" (34). Mr Feron's position in the household is more isolated:

When he was home they wasn't speaking to one another, and when he wasn't home just about all Mum *could* talk about was how terrible he was, how he was a waster, a boozer, and everything under the sun. She got the big boys and big girls on her side, and when the old man drifted in Eddie and Jock would swear at him and Sadie would yell and carry on. She really seemed to hate him, Sadie, she'd sort of get into a frenzy.

'Piss faced stinking old goat,' she used to say.

One day she spat at him, and he didn't do anything, just wiped it off. (23-4)

Gradually, however, male members of the household absent themselves, beginning with Mr Feron, invariably referred to only as 'the old man'. His presence has never been constant, nor has it ensured the financial security of the family; nevertheless, Ginnie remembers a point when "the old man had cleared out again, and this time he never came back" (20).

The passivity and absence of male 'heads' of households are familiar signs of matriarchal, matriducal working-class families. On the other

hand, the mother-daughter relation is far from idealised. There is a bitter nurture in the Feron household, suggested by Sadie's references to her mother as "'Old vinegar tits'" (51). Further, there is mutual hostility in Fag's sly contradiction of her mother's assertion, when she threatens to send Fag to Nazareth House to live with the other orphans, that "'There's a cellar under Nazareth House . . . and it's filled with quicklime, and when the orphans play up the nuns throw them onto the quicklime and it eats into their arms and legs and faces'" (37). Fag argues against this that "'The nuns are just ordinary people and all they do is nag the orphans and hit them and say horrible things to them, just like ordinary mothers'" (37). The novel also emphasises 'cultural' matrilinearity, the continuity of women's lives in lines of descent from mother to daughter. However, although the overall construction of the narrative functions as a celebration of this continuity, and as will be shown, as a condemnation of those forces which have interfered with its perpetuation, it is narrated by the characters themselves in more fatalistic tones. Fag recalls her wedding:

I was horrified to realise . . . Mum's limp cotton frock was just a shade or two darker than my own lovely dress with its silver beads and padded sleeves.

'Mrs Carrel,' Roddie said to me. 'Time for us to be off.'

Mrs Carrel? I thought. She's his mother ...

And for a moment or two I was confused. It was as though I was Roddie's wife, and his mother, and my own mother too, Mum in a limp blue frock. (202)

If it is argued that Fag's disidentification with her working-class background compromises the reliability of the sentiments expressed in her narrative within the context of the novel's 'intent', an argument which will be contested later in this discussion, Ginnie also expresses ambivalence about her own status in the perpetuation of the conditions of women's lives, specifically, motherhood: "I can remember giving one last almighty scream just as it was born, because I thought, this is really the end, I'm splitting in two now, I'm dying, I'm splitting apart and that's all there is to it. I'm dead./But of course I wasn't dead, I was a mother" (224).

Language performs a pivotal thematic function in the novel; it characterises a working-class women's culture, but also provides an entry into the analysis of the process by which such a culture is both posited in and problematised by, the novel. Linguistic, idiomatic specificity has been shown to evoke a self-contained and self-sustaining language community.

However, language is also presented as a highly politicised resource, and actively territorialised in discourse. Early in childhood, Ginnie and Fag learn of the relationship between language and power, language both as weapon and defence, as threatening and protective. At kindergarten, their make-shift tricycle is made fun of by a more well-to-do child with a sparkling new one: "'This trike's a special sort,' Fag said. 'It's um, a special racing model and there's sacking on it to protect it. . . .'/Fag was good at spinning a yarn. So while she cracked up our trike all the other kids started jostling around looking at it" (64-5). Humour is another strategy of discursive protection or defence, whether against an Other, or even the harsh conditions of their own lives. An example which illustrates both of these occurs when Auntie Aggie reports a district nurse's diagnosis of her as having malnutrition. As defence against the irrelevance of a word whose meaning must be sought in a dictionary, to the solution of the reality, grounded in economics rather than ignorance, of insufficient food, and at the same time against the reality of that insufficiency itself, Aunt Aggie tells the Feronis, "'Said I've got to eat more. . . . I'd be happy to eat more but the legs of the furniture aren't too tasty if you don't have a bottle of sauce to help them go down'" (43). However, the larger battle of discourses which comprises the text can be understood in terms of a posited essential mutual antagonism between 'oral' -- understood as spontaneous and expressive -- and 'literary' -- or institutionalised and deceptive -- discourse. Fag's talent at 'yarn-spinning' is early evidence of her developing passion for language, fuelled by school. However, this is represented as the beginning of her alienation from the reality of working-class life, culminating in her personal dislocation and representing the effective demise of the 'culture' of which she should have been heir. She recalls that "Once school had given us literacy it started to open up other things, it started giving us access to the whole world of words. And that was really something. That really excited us, especially me" (77). Later, she recounts that "I was getting feverish for words, and especially *long* words. I loved to look at them, to listen to them, to hunt them up in their hiding places in thick books and let my brain sort of lovingly caress them" (85).

However, Fag's obsession and talent with words earns only the resentment and contempt of her mother. Ginnie remembers Mum Feron's warning to Fag: "'Let me tell you, madam, . . . what happens to nasty deep cats like you, let me tell you'. . . ./But Fag kept reading books,

and that made Mum angrier than ever. Mum hated books" (37). For Mum Feron, language is a weapon used to confuse and divide the working class, and, the Historian reports, schools are in the front line of the offensive: "The Feron view of schools was that they were prisons built by 'them' to turn working people into slaves, to tangle and trick working people with words and numbers and symbols, to let loose a noose of language and send it flying through the air to strangle you" (63). That this is an ironically literary view of schools attributed to Mum Feron, symptomatic of the novel's many contradictions, will be addressed later.<sup>134</sup> However, it is suggested that those members of the working class exposed to too much school are potential or actual traitors to their class. When Fag and Ginnie hear Mum Feron and their sister Peggy talking in the kitchen, and Fag presumes to correct Peggy's pronunciation from "somethink" to "something", Mum Feron reinforces Peggy's dismissal of her, with the reproof, "'Youse two shut yer big mouths. . . . We was talking to the butcher not the block'" (94). Part of her resentment is shown to be the fear of ridicule, which is shown in the women's ambivalence toward Uncle Jim Smithers. They believe that he has, through transgressing what is seen as a defining and self-constitutive discursive boundary, stepped outside of his proper social place, and is likely to betray them. Therefore, despite the girls' fascination with him, "we hated him really. Mum was sort of scared of him, cause of all the big words he used. She was scared he was making fun of her, and she thought he was a cut above her. And he thought he was too" (42). Nevertheless, Fag's alienated position, her lack of 'true' understanding is underscored by her unexpected encounter with her father shortly before she is to get married: "'A pitcher,' he said. 'I'll buy yer a pitcher.'/ I was so confused I didn't know what he was talking about. A jug? Does he mean a jug? Then I saw a sign over the door he was leading me through, Bellevue Picture Framers./ 'Any pitcher you like,' he said" (199).

However, it is not simply a matter of self-defined discursive territories protecting their own grounds and their own constituencies: if they were entirely self-defined and discrete, there would be no need to defend the boundary between them. Instead, they are not simply protective of, but defined *by* discourse, mutually and in struggle. For example, the working-class integrity for which Mum Feron stands in the novel is also a discursive construct to which she is subjected, and which is integrally linked to institutionally-defined access to resources. Fag recalls that to

qualify as the 'deserving poor', there were systems or codes of domestic signification: "Spring cleaning was [a] way of showing we were 'poor but clean'" (48), an activity to which the use of 'dolly tints' was indispensable. Thus, the curtains "would emerge a yellowy sort of orange, ready to hang in our windows for another year, a jaundiced banner of good household management" (49). The Historian is less circumspect in the characterisation of discourse as a weapon violently wielded against working women. It is asserted that "In 1929, when Ginnie and Fag were born, women like Margaret Feron were being bludgeoned with phrases like 'scientific mothering'" (13), the implication being that a false, discursive mothering was imposed from without on to non-discursive, 'natural' mothering. However, the territories of bourgeois discourse do not only mount attacks against the authenticity and terrain of 'working-class' discourse; it must also apparently protect itself through the guarding of its institutional domains against *inappropriate* working-class incursions. Thus Fag recounts, "I'd discovered the Sydenham Public Library":

It was one of those places built in colonial times for 'the improvement of the working class', partly paid for by the ratepayers and partly by charitable benefactions. . . . Inside there were these stupendously lipsticked women in grey cardigans who guarded the books. If you came in and looked as though you were going to disturb the books 'shelved' in rows, if you looked like you were actually going to take down a book and read a few pages, these women would sort of flash their glasses at you and let out little hisses. (85)

If discourse is both an object and site of struggle, the need for these territorial boundaries and their vigilant defence problematises the notion of essential and natural class language. If there are working-class incursions into bourgeois discursive territory which must be prevented by both the working class itself and bourgeois discursive formations, it is instructive to consider what perceived benefits and dangers are located in bourgeois discourse, and why these must not be sought by or made accessible to, working-class people. Finally, what are the effects of this vigorous system of attacks and defences? As the character most attracted to the powers of language, Fag's view provides both an insight into its attraction, and at the same time a possible reading of Mum Feron's resistance. Having noted the role of school in opening up the world of literacy, Fag continues:

before starting school when we'd looked at books and magazines and newspapers we'd thought they looked very interesting but also very esoteric, very remote. When you can't read, language on a page just seems like an endless stream of letters, but once you've been taught to look at it the 'right' way and you start to see that it can be made to form pools or lagoons of meaning, well it's dazzling. (77)

Although it is not what Fag means, the word "dazzling" is the key to Mum Feron's suspicion of, and antipathy towards, literary language. Fag and Ginnie become obsessed with movies, Hollywood magazines, and romance magazines. One of these is called *Miracles and Oracles*. Indeed, their engagement with such literature is profoundly inter-textual, conditioning their reception of even texts usually located outside of romance narrative. For example, Fag remembers religious instruction at school. The parson would

lisp stories about the Christ child, and camels through the eyes of needles and so on, and handed out what he called:

'Christian literature'.

On hearing the word 'literature', Ginnie and I were on the alert. Now that we could read, we were eager to read everything.

Mind you, the little limp books the parson passed round didn't seem up to the standards of *Miracles and Oracles* at first. (81)

However, apart from the "stumbling block" of sin, Fag reasons that much of the Christian message does indeed fit in "just right with all the fairy stories and the movies and the love magazines:"

They disagreed with one another on points of detail, it was true, but they all made it clear that the thing that did the trick, the thing that took Cinderella or the sinner or the princess from poverty, sadness, loneliness, unhappiness to bliss was love. 'God is love,' the little religious pamphlets told us. 'Only true love can bring true happiness,' sighed the heroines of the silver screen.

... [I]n time we'd be saved by Jesus Christ or Clark Gable. (83)

It is the power of language to 'seduce' its working-class victims into hopeless fantasy and inevitable disappointment that Mum Feron resists, and sometimes brutally exhorts Fag to do also. She points out the impracticality of "'Wasting yer time with trashy romances'" (80) in the face of what she sees as the inevitability of their lives. "If you think words will pay the rent you've got another think coming" (80), and she points out that "'Only words worth reading are printed on a one quid note'" (80). That this condemnation of romance literature is central to the novel's

argument is evident in its title: *Oracles and Miracles* is a reversal of the title of the magazine *Miracles and Oracles*, or as Fag reflects, "Miracles and Oracles. A literature of dreamland" (79). As such a reversal, it contrasts reality with dream, while indicating in its echo of the title the ultimately destructive influence of such literature and its ideas both on their individual lives, and on the 'culture' they embody. Ginnie learns the proffered lesson well. She recalls that:

After I'd been at the factory a while I stopped dreaming about being rich or beautiful or famous. I just thought about how to get onto a better machine, how to divvy up my wages, or how nice my new shoes looked. I started thinking that real life was just a matter of getting along from one day to the next. That was about what it amounted to, there wasn't any point thinking about what you couldn't have. (146-7)

It is not simply the irrelevance of literature, but its perceived danger in dislocating working-class girls from their 'true' place without being able to guarantee acceptance into middle-class life: "No sense sticking yer nose in butter if yer going to have to eat dripping the rest of yer life" (117). This motif of the mother's apparently cruel or destructive, but protective instinct is familiar in the literature of mother-daughter relations.<sup>135</sup> There is even the suggestion that the Feron girls' given names have been wrested from them and replaced with prosaic nicknames in an attempt to prevent them romanticising their own possibilities. Ginnie and Fag both rename themselves in their games, Ginnie becoming Diana, and Fag, Pamela. In other fantasies, Fag, whose real name is Daphne, refers to herself as Daphne de Feron. Fag eventually names her own daughter Pamela. However, both girls, as well as other Feron girls, regard their given names as entirely inaccessible to them. Ginnie recalls being told by the supervisor at the factory, "Janet, please call her Ellen. . . . I think Ellen is such a pretty name and Hock sounds so awful."/Well I kept calling her Hock, but it was nice of Mrs Goodham to care about us, I thought" (140).

There is a strong evocation of the different 'worlds' of working-class and middle-class 1930s and 1940s Christchurch; clearly demarcated geographical territories which amount to cultural boundaries. Characters who try to bridge or even transgress these boundaries are condemned by the narrative as, at best, deluded, at worst, radically inauthentic. Images of 'unreality' are used to evoke the essential difference and inaccessibility of the 'world' beyond the South Christchurch suburbs of Spreydon and

Addington, undermining the attraction this other world may hold. For example, Ginnie and Fag were regularly sent into the town centre as children on various messages for their mother, such as going to the courthouse to "'slap a writ' on the old man" (25) for money. Ginnie reflects that, despite the distance, "it was nice once we crossed the railway and got into the middle of town where there was the river and the big smart shops and the weeping willows and that, it was like the postcards of Christchurch you could see on the news stands in Sydenham" (25). That these parts of Christchurch are only as real and as accessible as postcard images to the people of Sydenham both underlines the unreality of this other world to their normal lives, and casts them as 'tourists' or cultural outsiders when they venture into it. Fag's incursions into such territory are accompanied by fantasies which ameliorate the anxieties and discomforts of the reality. Although a short tram journey is a special attraction attached to the trip to the Charitable Aid centre, Fag imagines "(Travelling by tram, we do it all the time, shopping at the smart department stores, afternoon tea on bentwood chairs at big windows with little statues of naked gods beside us, looking down onto Cathedral Square)" (55).

When working-class and middle-class 'worlds' are held in contrast, the novel posits the necessity of recognising them as essential territories, as constituting their respective constituents' authentic 'place'. Transgressions are represented as incurring only the status of inauthenticity. However, that the desire to enter the territory of the Other is manifested by both middle-class and working-class characters, serves to problematise the essentialisation of their difference. For example, there are bourgeois characters who are attracted to the perceived authenticity of working-class life. The child with the new red bicycle at kindergarten is so duped by Fag's description of theirs as a real racing model that he willingly lends his to them while he rides (the representation of) their ramshackle toy. Their promise of its authenticity is clearly enough for the boy to believe it, and ironically evokes the vulnerability of the bourgeoisie to their own romantic desire to invest the Other with the 'truth'. Ginnie recalls that she can "still remember . . . thinking how queer it was that those other kids could be talked into thinking how a heap of old junk was better than what they had" (65). Much later, Fag realises that what she is expected to provide for Roddie is working-class 'truth', and she feels that "the only reason he listened to me was to make sure I was the real thing, a



real working class girl, who was unhappy" (180). A more obvious attempt to appropriate working-class 'authenticity' occurs when Roddie decides that he would like to undertake odd jobs around the home, "'like a working man'" (198). He presumes to tell Fag that "'working people have a lot to be angry about'" (180), and that because of this, he has joined the Labour Party. However, his condescending gestures only earn Fag's resentment. Just as she recalls that "I began to feel angry at him, this well groomed, well heeled man in his grey felt hat, walking around Addington like a psychiatrist visiting a mental hospital" (179), she now finds that suddenly, she "felt resentful again, I felt as though he wanted to take my life and pick up the whole of Phillipstown and Addington and Spreydon and put them in some sort of filing cabinet in his brain, as though people like me were just some sort of problem for people like him to solve" (180). The message is that he should remain within his own political and discursive domain. Yet these images of institutional incarceration and organised knowledge also disrupt such a meaning. They suggest that power relations actually define these domains.

On the other hand, Mum Feron explains that it is not only acceptable, but almost beholden on working people to take whatever they found "'lying round'" as 'perks' from the workplace. She explains that "'It's part of yer wages cause the bosses will make more out of you than you'll get back in yer pay packet, so it's up to you to take stuff to make up the difference. And don't take anything that belongs to another worker, just stuff that belongs to the bosses'" (144). In this 'us against them' paradigm, she understands that the working people must unite against the bosses to regain what is theirs in the first place. However, Fag, who represents the demise of working-class solidarity finds that when she and Roddie become property owners, "All of a sudden I was a Mrs Moneygall, a Mrs Stevenson, a Lady Pelf. And I was starting to feel the way they felt too" (213). Indeed, Eldred-Grigg has asserted that Fag represents the destruction of the 'working-class personality': "it certainly is my opinion that becoming bourgeois always shatters the personality of a working class person, as well as harming the political position of the working class as a whole."<sup>136</sup> However, the essentialism of this notion requires further analysis, to show how in positing it, the text also works against it.

There is a mutual antagonism portrayed between the Feron girls and local Maori children. On their journeys to get coal, Maori children

regularly attack them as they broach their territory. However, as well as this example of physical territoriality, language is politicised into territories as well. Fag and her friend Nancy begin learning Maori at night school, and armed with their little knowledge, decide to visit a pa at Tuahiwi to practise on the local inhabitants. However, they bring with them images and expectations which can only be characterised as colonising. Their images consist of nineteenth-century romance and picture book exoticism, and Fag's fantasies venture even further as she imagines herself a cultural 'missionary': "I had a sudden vision of myself sitting under a palm tree on a beach in the North Island, with a volcano smoking behind me and grateful Maoris in piupius giving me presents for explaining the ways of the white man" (159); they are therefore disappointed to find what they regard as a less authentic architecture and surroundings, that "there were no palisades or wooden statues, just an ordinary country township, little houses scattered along a dusty road" (160). Further, they expect to receive gratitude for their efforts to learn Maori. However, their judgement of authenticity and expected grateful welcome is turned back on them as they begin to converse in Maori to be greeted only by the uncontrollable laughter of the Maori children: "They started rolling around on the grass, laughing and pointing at us. After a while it seemed a bit scary, there seemed to be something going on we didn't understand" (160). Although this appears again as an argument for remaining within one's appropriate discursive and cultural boundaries if one is to remain authentic, the 'truth' which they have not 'understood', the full weight of the differences within and between elements of the working class, finally militates against such essentialism, and requires a different reading of the construction of their lives.

An analysis of the 'terrain' of working-class discourse as it is represented, as opposed to the discernment of it from the middle class as 'territory', serves to problematise its easy essentialisation as a 'culture'. The oppositions of 'us' and 'them' are destabilised not only by, but within the posited working-class culture. Hierarchies of prestige, prejudices, and perceptions of otherness not only destabilise the notion of a working-class women's culture, but are shown themselves to be unstable and shifting formations. As opposed to a unified essence, it is ultimately shown to be characterised by *différance*. The Ferons do not belong to an idealised community of harmonious neighbourhood relations.<sup>137</sup> Neighbours are looked down upon, or criticised; prejudices form the bases of

categorisations and identifications of difference among working-class people. Fag ironically notes that "apart from the personality defects which strangely enough almost everybody seemed to be afflicted with, our neighbours had an unfortunate tendency to be Catholic, Irish, dirty, uppity, sottish, and all the rest of it" (46). Much of this is shown to be the attempt to attain some self esteem by pointing to the inherent inferiority or imposed disadvantage of others: "[E]ven though we knew we were rough and poor, we weren't above looking down our noses a bit at some of our neighbours" (46). For example, the households in their neighbourhood are hierarchised in terms of whether they have an employed male head of the household, an unemployed male head, or no male head at all. The latter are regarded as the bottom of the social 'heap' (50); however, as the Feronis discover, these are not essential and inviolable categories. Despite their smugness that "Even we weren't at the bottom of the heap, we belonged to a group of families in Simeon Street where the 'heads of the household' . . . were unskilled workers" (50), they find that "in Braddon Street we were getting near rock bottom. . . . /The loss of the wage came hard and by the time we shifted from Braddon Street to Kent Street, Mum had definitely slipped into the rank of the deserted woman. This was awkward. Mum had to shift her ideas about who was 'them' and who was 'us'" (50-1).

Therefore, the danger of essentialising the 'culture' of the Other is, on the one hand, that the Other becomes primarily that which constitutes the self as securely not-Other, and in this sense, the Other *is* essential. Further, it obscures the need for a critique of capitalist class relations as the classes are posited as 'natural' rather than the effects of oppression. Indeed, as will be shown, the tendency to late twentieth-century post-colonial valorisation of the working class fails to be understood as valorising the effects of oppression; the terms of this idealisation are located in the lost authenticity of the bourgeoisie and its late capitalist transformations.

4. IV. (ii). *The Ideal Other*. *Oracles and Miracles* attempts to posit the world of working-class women as a world of truth, a world constituted by reality and as reality as opposed to the falsity of bourgeois culture. Stevan Eldred-Grigg calls it, as we have seen, a culture "older and wiser than capitalism."<sup>138</sup> The authenticity of working-class culture is constructed through the use of two, inter-related, binary oppositions: the spoken and the written word, and the body and the mind. On the surface, the text

privileges the 'speaking-body' nexus, exemplified in the discourse of Mum Feron. The scatological emphasis of Mum Feron's discourse has been noted;<sup>139</sup> however, although this is true to the point of being impossible to overlook, it is arguably less important in terms of the overall text that this language is defiantly in transgression of middle-class taboos (thereby providing a source, through the text, of middle-class titillation and the pleasure of vicarious transgression), than that it grounds her discourse in the relentless, unglamorous, *bodily* 'real'. Certainly the humour of such observations as that landlords are "all so tight . . . they wouldn't know the Brighton tram was up them till it rang its bell and people started getting off" (26), or "That bloody Ruby . . . . Gitting so bloody high and mighty she wouldn't show a blind widow a short cut to the dunny" (109), serves to attract the reader to a character whose harshness may otherwise be alienating, and this is important in terms of Mum Feron's role as exemplar of the working-class women's culture Eldred-Grigg wishes to reconstruct. However, what is also evoked in the predominance of bodily imagery is the centrality of the body to working-class women's lives, and by extension that only discourse grounded in the 'truth' of the body is relevant or authentic to (the representation of) these lives.

The grounding of discourse in the body, and its effects on the body comprise Mum Feron's epistemology. "'That bitch,' she'd mutter [referring to a neighbour]. . . . 'Talks so bloody much she gives me corns on the ear'" (46), or another would be so stupid "'you could ride to Brighton and back on her brain and it wouldn't be sharp enough to cut yer bum'" (46), while still another is indecisive: "'She's neither yer arse nor yer elbow'" (46). Discourse is not an intellectual but a profoundly physical activity whose bodily constitution almost outweighs content in importance. Fag remembers when she "stood there in front of Ruby's mouth, watching it open and close" (187), and "Auntie Aggie or Auntie Millie, sitting side by side and exercising their jaws down at the bottom of the table" (201). Similarly, Ginnie describes a landlord's wife as "really skinny, with scraggly sort of hair and a tongue that could take paint off a tram" (218).

The physicality of the women's work is not glamorised: it is portrayed as exhausting and even brutal. In contrast with the satisfying and almost complacent efficiency of the Aunts' housework in Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*, Mum Feron's food preparation is represented in images of

violence, as she is described "stripping the skin off some parsnips" (87), and "shov[ing] a knife into a parsnip" (161). Bodily cleanliness was also pursued with physical zeal. Fag remembers her mother's contention that "'We might be poor. . . but at least we're clean'", and explains, "Not that we were all that clean; it was just that Mum put a lot of energy into a lot of violent scrubblings, scrapings, sandings, and delousings to satisfy her understanding of what cleanliness was" (47). However, working-class women like Mum Feron were not simply the perpetrators of acts of domesticated 'violence': they were also their 'victims'. The Historian recounts that:

the Feron women like most working women everywhere in South Christchurch continued like their grandmothers to scald their hands to a corned beef red as they boiled up their washing in the copper out the back, and burned the skin off their knuckles with lye soap as they scrubbed dirt off the linoleum in the front, and singed the tips of their fingers as they poked sticks into the cooking range in the kitchen. (76)

However, despite the harshness of its lot, the working body is valorised for its truth to origins. This is largely accomplished by its being contrasted with the seductive falsity of the romanticised body: the body in love, and particularly in magazine and movie representations of love and beauty. For Ginnie, these pose a troubling sense of her own physical inadequacy. She remembers that

For me the biggest curse was my hair. It was red, of course, or ginger really, a sort of mop of fuzz. And my eyes was a sort of muddy green. Scarlet O'Hara had green eyes, so that was something, but hers were 'as green as the hills of Ireland' and mine looked more like the green at the bottom of a sump. And I was pudgy too. Me and Fag read about 'puppy fat' in some of the love magazines and we decided that was what was happening to me. . . .

Fag had her problems too, of course. She was really skinny. (94)

Nevertheless, Fag is willing to submit her body to the 'violent' technologies of ideal feminine attractiveness as represented by movie stars and other celebrities, in a 'disciplining' of the body foreshadowed but not specified by Foucault, "a modality of the body that is peculiarly feminine."<sup>140</sup> Fag recounts that

I got scientific about my appearance. I plucked and pencilled like Lana Turner, I depilated and waxed and polished like Grace Kelly, I put lipstick on with the expertise of Elizabeth Taylor.

I strutted on stilettos. I garotted myself in a tight wasp waist. I loved that narrow waist, that new style with its sloping shoulders and surging wider skirts. It seemed so romantic . . . it was like Scarlett O'Hara and Lady Barker. . . . And, like Scarlett and Lady Barker, I laced my ribs into a knot, I stuffed my breasts and behind with foam rubber and nylon. A new style of brassiere, ferociously wired. . . .(236)

Despite the evocation of the impositions of the Hollywood glamour industry on the bodies of working-class girls, the danger of positing the artificiality of the former and the authenticity of the latter is that it overlooks that *all* bodies are constructed by power, and that there is no access to a body which is outside relations of power.<sup>141</sup> The processes of construction of compliant, or in Foucault's term, "docile",<sup>142</sup> working-class bodies within capitalist class relations can be found throughout *Oracles and Miracles*. The bodies of school children are disciplined -- in the sense of *structured or institutionalised*, as much as *punished* -- and surveyed, in manners which suggest only the necessity of discipline itself, that compliance is indeed the objective. Ginnie recalls the words of their first teacher: "'We don't use the left hand, Janet and Daphne Feron,' she said, 'we use the right hand. What do we call left handed people, children?'/ 'South-paws-Miss-Mitchell-son,' the kids all chanted" (69). However, if repetition and vigilant surveillance do not achieve conformity, violence is also used: "Miss Mitchellson would nag and nag us and tell us southpaws never got anywhere but Sunnyside. Then in the end, when she'd worked herself up into enough of a paddy, down would come the ruler on our knuckles" (70).

As well as compliant bodies, capitalism requires healthy, 'efficient' bodies, able to work productively. It could be argued as being to this rather than a philanthropic end, that the children's nutritional and hygiene status is surveyed. During a period of relative financial security, Ginnie and Fag are congratulated by the school health nurse in front of the class, where all such examinations are conducted, for having "'Two of the best lunches in the class. . . . Bread for starch, meat paste for protein, butter for fats, and home made plum jam for sugar and minerals. Much better than the crusts and cold faggots so many of you children are eating'" (93). Eating has therefore become both an intimidatingly scientific practice, as well as a moral issue, and like the district nurse's diagnosis of Aunt Aggie's need to eat more, the problem is treated as one of ignorance requiring pedagogical intervention.

However a remarkable and ultimately even deceptive strategy of power is its decentralisation or surveillance, consistent with Foucault's description of the functioning of the Panopticon, so that its effects are felt to be everywhere.<sup>143</sup> Working-class people are made to feel they are always everywhere under the bourgeois gaze, and thus become dedicated and efficient agents of their own surveillance and discipline. Thus, Fag recalls

We always 'did well' in 'Health,' thanks to the way Mum had drilled us and thanks to the way Peggy and Sadie kept attacking us with toothbrushes and combs and hairbrushes. And our nails were always clean. Mum was forever ordering Peggy to 'git onto those fingernails,' telling us they looked like 'spades from a Irish spud farm.' Peggy, seizing a kitchen knife, would pare them right down to the quick. (93)

This procedure is barely less violent than the impositions of 'fashion', yet the latter is regarded as a falsifying one, while the former is consistent with the notion of 'poor but clean', the badge of pride worn by the Feronas as expressing their true reality, but also a source of political exoneration for capitalist power relations. If the working class can preserve the standards of cleanliness approved by middle-class sensibility, their presence -- as different -- may be overlooked. If they are 'the same', there is no 'problem' of class. This rationale is further supported by working-class appropriations of these standards as matters of dignity and pride.

Working-class girls like Ginnie and Fag must also be dispossessed of illusions that their abilities or dreams may release them from the inevitable patterns for their lives set down by preceding generations of women like them. Both family and educational institutions work to keep them in their proper place. For example, Fag approaches her teacher in Standard Six:

'I want to go to high school next year, Miss Lightowler,' I said. 'I want to learn languages and that. I'm going to be a novelist.'

The minute I said it I felt this horrible sinking feeling in my stomach, as though by putting my dream in words I'd shown myself how impossible it was.

Miss Lightowler didn't seem to notice anything very particular about my feelings. She just gave me a quick glance then looked back at her papers.

'Nonsense,' she said.

....

... 'You'll go to Tech and you'll be a typist. ... There's no reason why someday you shouldn't be somebody's secretary.' (125)

Although Ginnie has been less enthusiastic about school than Fag, her feelings about factory work are unequivocal. She is both afraid and bitterly unhappy, recalling that "I cried myself to sleep every night. I felt like I was just a machine that had to clock itself in at eight o'clock in the morning and then keep working till clocking out time at quarter to five of an afternoon" (137). It may appear ironic that later, Roddie's middle-class family are described by Fag as being "like well painted and very well oiled machines, those people, they seemed to move and talk like very subtle robots" (191). However, that both are described in very similar dehumanised imagery suggests that they are both constructs of the same system: they are simply positioned differently within capitalist power relations. Neither has a 'truer' or 'more authentic' identity under capitalism than the other; it is not a matter of 'capitalists' being the false constructs of capitalism, while the workers retain their natural identity -- they are both constructs of an oppressive class system. To ground the authenticity of Mum Feron's life in its bodily reality is therefore ultimately vulnerable to deconstruction of the underlying misconception of the existence of a natural body outside of ideology. At the same time, to read the tragedy as Fag's disruption and loss of an authentic culture of the past is to risk complicity with a romanticised reconstruction of the effects of oppressive class-power relations. It is to posit Mum and to a lesser extent Ginnie Feron as the desirable Others to endemic bourgeois alienation.

4. IV. (iii). *Appropriate(d) Authority?* As has been noted already, Eldred-Grigg has questioned his own position as a middle-class man writing about working-class women; however, he differentiates his own writing from that of writers whose "Lack of working class credentials . . . never prevented [them] from filling their stories with working class characters." Further, Eldred-Grigg argues, these writers produced work which reflected that "what they knew [about working class life] was distorted and made suspect by their idealised and notional image of 'the worker'."<sup>144</sup> He has described, both in "Working Class Novel, Okay?", which is largely an apologia for *Oracles and Miracles*, and also in a more extended analysis of the class bases of New Zealand writing from the 1920s to 1959, how this idealisation tended to identify the 'worker' with the figure of the solitary, itinerant male, engaged in casual and usually rural work. These characters were posited by writers of this period as challenges to the perceived character of New Zealand life as "'dumb and numb, null and dull,'"<sup>145</sup> and to the loss of 'real' values in the emergence of



materialist, 'false', middle-class New Zealand. Indeed, Eldred-Grigg argues, these writers, although predominantly of middle-class background and means themselves, tended to identify with the stereotypes they created.<sup>146</sup> However, while he posits the stereotype as romanticised myth, far removed from and in fact obscuring the 'reality' of the alienation and discontent of urban industrial and domestic workers,<sup>147</sup> there is a tendency for his analysis to focus on the correctness or incorrectness of the image. He specifies elements of *its* functioning as social critique founded in nostalgia for the pre-industrial 'Man Alone', rather than the functioning of *all* such stereotypical images, including his own, as attempts to address the desire for the plenitude of origins. More precisely, although he acknowledges the roles these figures played in constructions of national identity,<sup>148</sup> and as constituting vicarious oppositional stances for the writers themselves,<sup>149</sup> he has disavowed the presence of some of the same processes, functions and dangers into his own 1980s representation of mid-twentieth-century working-class life. *Oracles and Miracles* romanticises the lives of working-class women, not because their lives could be construed as 'romantic' but because they are constructed as the lost ("older and wiser") Other to the bourgeois culture condemned in both the novel and in its inter-texts. This, as Mark Williams has observed, is "most apparent in the obsession he displays with oral culture. . . . For Eldred-Grigg, orality offers a way back to a world that was simple and complete, however impoverished."<sup>150</sup> It is therefore with a 1980s nostalgia for cultural wholeness and integrity, in the face of late capitalist industrial or post-industrial society, with which he "invests the mental universe of Canterbury working people in the 1930s."<sup>151</sup>

This nostalgia, the "1980s dissatisfactions and desires" which characterise it, can be seen in *Oracles and Miracles* to be overdetermined: there is the desire of the historian for 'more' or 'different' history; the desire of a literate middle class, whose culture is dominated by the technologies of print and image, for the 'authenticity' of the working class and its 'oral culture'; and the desire of a man for the elusive Otherness of women's lives. Although some of these points have been raised in previous discussion, they require amplification in the context of questions of *authority*.

*Oracles and Miracles* is located, albeit only partially and ambivalently, within historical discourse, but rather than the history of monumental

events and similarly monumental agencies or figures in/of that history, it is the history of ordinary, unknown people and the unspectacular facts of everyday life. To some extent, Eldred-Grigg's novel constitutes an attempt to 'set the record straight', as he points out that despite the dominant literary portrait of working-class life,

Most workers were women, not men. Many workers were unpaid, or spent their lives shuffling reluctantly backwards and forwards between unpaid housework during their childhood, wage work during their young adult years, unpaid housework again after marriage, then scraps and patches of wage work subsidising the housework as too many kids came along and the main wage in the household wore thin or stopped with the death or desertion of the husband.<sup>152</sup>

This is precisely the pattern of the lives of the Feron women. However, there is also the implication that the 'history' of these women has remained invisible but intact, waiting to be brought to the surface of history's discourse; that having been suppressed, it was now being liberated into expression. The danger in such a notion is the elision of the role of the historian. As the historian (lower case), Eldred-Grigg fills the role of 'liberator' of working women's discourse; at the same time, he is characterised as a discursive explorer and discoverer, venturing into the dark terrain of unwritten discourse to draw it into the map of history's disciplinary progress. However, in *Oracles and Miracles*, there is not only Eldred-Grigg, novelist-historian, but also the figure of the Historian (upper case) in the text, whose discourse contextualises, amplifies, and in general terms *mediates* the stories of Ginnie and Fag. Early in the novel, the Historian states that "The truth was too complex for the Feron, like all of us, with our formulas, our slogans that come so effortlessly and endlessly, our phrases that divide confusion into order" (26). Because the Feron, apparently like any of history's subjects, are inadequate subjects of history and cannot be left to tell their own story, the Historian provides a 'background' of the social structures and hierarchies of Christchurch (26), the statistics of paid workforce membership and pay rates (165-6), the contrast between commercial and promotional advertising regarding labour-saving appliances and the reality of their limited sphere of distribution among the city's population (74), descriptions of the Feron attitude towards schools and schools' attitudes towards families like the Feron (63, 91), and much more. Sources, in a number of cases alluded to in the text, are not the 'authorised' or authoritative historical documents

and accounts, but newspapers, brochures, government statistics reports, newsletters.

Answering the criticism that the voice of the Historian is "'distracting'" and "'unnecessary,'" Eldred-Grigg argues that

No historian would agree . . . that people from a particular historical time should be left to tell their own story, since the job of history is to try to make sense of things across time, not to leave the past embedded in itself. . . . A more important question is . . . how much can the patterns drawn by the Historian . . . or the novelist . . . be allowed to obtrude on the 'truth.'<sup>153</sup>

The particular conception of a pure 'truth' which precedes and underlies the Historian's and the novelist's 'patterns' seems, at best, notional. Apart from the implication throughout the novel that the Feron's cannot 'know' the 'truth', rendering the Historian's pattern making constitutive, the role of the novelist has been one of the production of Fag's and Ginnie's truths, at the same time alienating Fag and Ginnie from them.

In a gesture of self-examination, Eldred-Grigg asks, "Why did I want to do this? Was I trying to appropriate these women?"<sup>154</sup> He resolves this anxiety by reasoning that he "had the skills, the training and the resources of an established writer. Ginnie and Fag had none of those things and no wish to acquire them, because their culture is oral and informal, not literary and structured."<sup>155</sup> However, in this he falls prey to the argument suppressed within his novel's celebration of working-class 'culture' *in itself*: Just as the Feron's are working class because they are so positioned within capitalism, so Eldred-Grigg has the discursive resource of *authority* because of his different and privileged positioning within the same structure. This is underscored by the novel's representation of Fag's desire to be a writer, her belief that she possessed the ability to acquire the skills, and her strong wish to do so, met with the dismissal of the school teacher whose 'function' was to quash such transgressive, even 'false' ideas, dreams and illusions in working-class girls (125). While the novel stands in condemnation of Fag's passion for literary language, it is this which has defined Eldred-Grigg as an historian-novelist. Further, the oral culture-based reality he privileges is in fact a textual construct: the discourses of Ginnie and Fag have been mediated not only by the Historian, but by Eldred-Grigg's (historical and literary) desire and his language.

Eldred-Grigg has emphasised the importance of the sounds, rhythms and idiom of 1930s working-class women's speech to his project. However, the representation of this speech has been fundamentally mediated by his own role as oral historian. He describes how he set about listening to women like Ginnie, "asking questions suggested to me by my training as a social historian and writer of fiction."<sup>156</sup> A significant amount of 'their' discourse must therefore be reflective of his own agendas. He then became enmeshed in questions of selection, to the extent that "Most of the stuff gathered in the interviews was eventually discarded. . . . Huge chunks of the 'real' lives of Ginnie and Fag were simply dropped."<sup>157</sup> Perhaps most significantly in relation to the avowed privileging of oral discourse, he describes the process of "turning something oral and informal into something literary."<sup>158</sup> One explanation for this transformation is its *necessity*, given that

All oral historians know that people talk in word packages rather than sentences. . . . Word packages elided until only the stump of a single word is left, silences, gestures, screwed up faces, jumps, lateral leaps ... hardly any reader would have the patience to keep up with it.<sup>159</sup>

Therefore, 'real' speech must be turned into 'literary-real' speech. However, another possible explanation has less to do with the ability of truths to be communicated through the use of their 'pure' oral form, and more to do with his own *literary desires*. Eldred-Grigg's initial aim was one of "turning the talk into a sort of ballad or fairy tale,"<sup>160</sup> forms which are oral in derivation, but which are activated and identified by the employment of conventions and formulae which problematise the opposition of oral and literary discourses. As has been shown in preceding discussion, Eldred-Grigg activates authenticating conventions for his literary language: the grounding of discourse in the body, evoking the unmediated emergence of that discourse from the very interior of one's being; the use of vernacular; and the use of periodising idiom, which evokes the truth of local colour. A further convention of truth-telling he employs is the first-person narrative, creating the impression that *Ginnie* or *Fag* is speaking, and that the reader therefore has unmediated access to their discourse. However, the oral historian's craft is constitutionally falsified: "almost every sentence has been totally reconstructed and fictionalised."<sup>161</sup>

There is some tension between Eldred-Grigg's roles as historian and novelist. Although employing the devices of narrative (used by fiction to represent truth), he also evokes the 'factual' or 'objective' conventions of historians' discourse. 'Local colour', already mentioned as prevalent in *Oracles and Miracles*, includes the names of streets and suburbs, descriptions of schools, shops, and other public and well-known buildings, and more. These details ground the realism of the text, although they also render it vulnerable to dispute on exactly those grounds in a way that fiction would not be held accountable to a reader's perception of the 'reality' represented.<sup>162</sup> In addition, Eldred-Grigg has expressed his own resistance to the possible appropriation of *Oracles and Miracles* by the literary institution of "New Zealand fiction. Which is a strange and sinister thing I don't want anything to do with."<sup>163</sup> He has registered horror at one reader's response to Mum Feron as soon to be "one of 'the great characters in our fiction.'"<sup>164</sup> However, this resistance would seem at best inconsistent with his own avowals of turning the talk into literature, history into fiction, and the women 'informants' into discursive constructs -- characters -- whose 'lives' are constituted through his own preconceived purposes, selection of detail, and shaping of its expression into a form accessible to late twentieth century literate readers. *Oracles and Miracles* is at least as much "ballad or fairy tale" -- precisely the literary sentimentality, the textual evocation of dreams and illusions -- that both he, and the 'argument' of the novel disavow, as it is history. Further, it is radically dislocated from the origins he seeks to attribute to it.

As a man 'soliciting' the stories of Ginnie and Fag, Eldred-Grigg's authoritative role points to the sexual politics of the 'confession'. Evoking Foucault's description of the religious and later scientific pressures to confess one's sex, the motivating force of *Oracles and Miracles* is both the historian's (lower case) *need* to complement or supplement the extant account of the lives of workers in the 1930s and 1940s with the lives of working girls and women. These lives are shown to be wholly located within relationships, for the "portrait of the worker as solitary is a particularly serious literary error. Solitude was a rare experience for working-class people, most of whom from the 1920s to the 1950s lived out their lives in small crowded rooms or large crowded workplaces."<sup>165</sup> In addition, the novel includes a section of discourse attributed to The Industrial Psychologist, who claims that

Another outstanding characteristic of factory girls is the degree to which their lives are absorbed by personal relationships. . . . [T]he lives of factory girls are not only dominated but absorbed by this factor. . . . [R]epetitive work, even though it takes up the greater part of their waking day, leaves them free to daydream about personal relationships.

. . . . [I]t is not surprising that in their lesisure time they want and need, in contrast to their working days, informality, warmth, friendliness, variety, and entertainment.

The younger, unmarried girls have an all-absorbing preoccupation with the subject of marriage. (172)<sup>166</sup>

Eldred-Grigg's position in relation to these women, both in listening to their talk and in compiling research data about working women in general to provide the context for that talk, is curiously akin to that of the character Roddie, whose attitude causes Fag to feel that "people like me were just some sort of problem for people like him to solve, . . . [that] the only reason he listened to me was to make sure I was the real thing, a real working-class girl" (180). However, as if in response to the anxiety produced by the perceived gender-distance between him and Fag and Ginnie, Eldred-Grigg has sought to annihilate that very distance/difference. Just as writers between 1920 and 1959 have been described as having "eagerly repudiated their own class"<sup>167</sup> to identify as "social vagabonds, idiosyncratic outsiders,"<sup>168</sup> so Eldred-Grigg has publicly identified himself as "'a full-time writer, a full-time housewife, and a full-time mother.'"<sup>169</sup>

What are the effects of his identifying with these socially and biologically female roles? It could be argued that, similar to Spivak's account of deprivileging the self, he chooses a 'deprivileged' identity thereby renouncing 'male privilege'. However, the gesture is not so clearly one of male self-abnegation, nor is his subjectivity so unilaterally constituted. European feminist Rosi Braidotti has wryly observed that

It must be very uncomfortable to be a male, white, middle-class intellectual at a time in history when so many minorities and oppressed groups are speaking up for themselves; a time when the hegemony of the white knowing subject is crumbling. Lacking the historical experience of oppression on the basis of sex, they paradoxically lack a minus. Lacking the lack, they cannot participate in the great ferment of ideas that is shaking up Western culture: it must be very painful indeed to have no option other than being the empirical referent of the historical oppressor of women, and being asked to account for his atrocities.<sup>170</sup>

This *would* all be very difficult had not the strategy of identification with and as the 'minus' not provided the grounds for disidentification with, and lack of historical accountability for, 'the oppressor', and for participation in whole new areas of discourse. On the other hand, Eldred-Grigg cannot *become* a woman in the sense that his identification has any more than subjective, indeed, fictional meaning: in other words, he may identify as a woman, but he could not be *identified* as a woman other than in the context of a willed act of suspension of disbelief. In this way, Eldred-Grigg's claims may be likened to Elaine Showalter's account of 'critical cross-dressing'. Adapted to the more general term, 'discursive cross-dressing', this parallels the theatrical phenomenon in that it amounts to "a way of promoting the notion of masculine power while masking it. In psychoanalytic theory, the male transvestite is not a powerless man; . . . he is a 'phallic woman' who can tell himself that 'he is, or with practice will become, a better woman than a biological female if he chooses to do so.'"171

The more complex positioning of Eldred-Grigg within discursive power politics in relation to the Feron women therefore raises, not literary-aesthetic questions, questions of discursive *terrain*, but questions of discursive *territory*, transgression and appropriation, which may be held together under the overarching political issue of authority which has become paramount in consideration of post-colonial fiction. Chapter Four has focused upon the authoritative and appropriative representations of 'others' by socially and culturally privileged subjects. In Chapter Five, I discuss a range of texts which constitute the accession to subjectivity on the part of 'others' of the dominant discursive network, a process which I term 'self-making'. However, as I argue, the entry of these 'others into discourse, and specifically into the valorised form of writing, also poses a challenge to the textual forms whose 'authority' has been predicated on the exclusion of difference.

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Notes.

<sup>1</sup> Foucault points out that "Territory is no doubt a geographical notion, but it's first of all a juridico-political one: the area controlled by a certain kind of power." He goes on to explain that "There is an administration of knowledge, a politics of knowledge, relations of power which pass via knowledge and which, if one tries to transcribe them, lead one to consider forms of domination designated by such notions as field, region and territory. And the politico-strategic term is an indication of how the military and the administration actually come to inscribe themselves both on a material soil and within forms of discourse". See Michel Foucault, "Questions on Geography," in Colin Gordon (ed), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. 68, 69.

<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language", in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (trans.) A.M. Sheridan Smith, (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1972), p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> Terdiman, p. 57.

<sup>5</sup> Terdiman, p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> Terry Goldie, *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Literatures* (Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> Goldie p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Goldie, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 20; cited in Goldie, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> See Margery Fee, "Romantic Nationalism and the Image of Native People in Contemporary English-Canadian Literature," in Thomas King, Cheryl Calver, and Helen Hoy (eds), *The Native in Literature: Canadian and Comparative Perspectives* (Downsview: ECW Press, 1987), p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Beth Brant, "Coming Out as Indian Lesbian Writers", in Ann Dybikowski et. al. (eds), *In the Feminine: Women and Words. Conference Proceedings* (Vancouver: Longspoon Press, 1983), p. 59.

<sup>12</sup> Barbara Godard, "The Politics of Representation: Some Native Canadian Women Writers," *Canadian Literature*, No. 124-125 (1990), p. 189.

<sup>13</sup> Godard, "The Politics of Representation," pp. 192-3.



- 14 Allan Hanson, "The Making of the Maori: Culture Invention and Its Logic," *American Anthropologist*, 91, No. 4 (1989), p. 894.
- 15 Hanson, p. 894-5. See also Michael King, *Being Pakeha* (Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), p. 174.
- 16 Jeannette C. Armstrong, "Writing From a Native Woman's Perspective," in Dybikowski et. al., p. 56.
- 17 Hanson, p. 895.
- 18 Barbara Godard, "Voicing Difference: the Literary Production of Native Women," in Shirley Neuman and Smaro Kamboureli (eds), *A/Mazing Space*, (Edmonton: Longspoon NeWest Press, 1988), p. 88.
- 19 Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 131-2.
- 20 Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 118. Foucault also specifies that "by truth I do not mean 'the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted', but rather 'the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true'" (p. 132).
- 21 Armstrong, in Dybikowski et. al., p. 56.
- 22 Armstrong, in Dybikowski et. al., p. 57.
- 23 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* (trans.) Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), p. 18.
- 24 See Dybikowski, et. al. My emphases.
- 25 Lilian Allen, "A Writing of Resistance: Black Women's Writing in Canada," in Dybikowski et. al., p. 63.
- 26 Godard, "The Politics of Representation," p. 210; citing Maracle, pp. 20-21.
- 27 Cuthand, in Dybikowski et.al., p. 53.
- 28 Cuthand, pp. 53-4.
- 29 "Since the Middle Ages at least, Western societies have established the confession as one of the main rituals we rely on for the production of truth," *The History of Sexuality*, p. 58.
- 30 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 61; my emphasis to evoke the sense of added value.
- 31 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 62.
- 32 Armstrong, in Dybikowski et. al., p. 56.
- 33 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 62.
- 34 Michael King, *Being Pakeha*, p. 195.

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- 35 Margery Fee, "Upsetting Fake Ideas: Jeannette Armstrong's *Slash* and Beatrice Culleton's *April Raintree*," *Canadian Literature*, No. 124-125 (1990), pp. 178-9.
- 36 Fee, "Upsetting Fake Ideas," pp. 178-9.
- 37 King, pp. 193-4.
- 38 Nicola Legat, "Claudia Orange and the Treaty of Waitangi Industry," *Metro*, 108 (June 1980), p. 99.
- 39 Legat, p. 99.
- 40 Sue Thomas, "Connections: Recent Criticism of Aboriginal Writing," *Meridian*, 8, No. 1 (1989), p. 45.
- 41 Legat, p. 99.
- 42 Armstrong, p. 56.
- 43 Armstrong, p. 56.
- 44 Thomas, p. 45.
- 45 Godard, "The Politics of Representation," p. 188.
- 46 Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in Donald F. Bouchard (ed. and trans. with Sherry Simon), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), p. 118.
- 47 Sneja Gunew, "Culture, Gender and the Author-Function: Wongar's *Walg*," *Southern Review*, 20 (1987), p. 201.
- 48 Ken Goodwin, *A History of Australian Literature*, (London: MacMillan, 1986), p. 269.
- 49 Keri Hulme, *The Bone People* (Auckland: Spiral, with Hodder and Stoughton, 1985). Citations from the text will be from this edition. While earlier editions used lower case initials for the title, and some critics have continued this, I will use capitals for the title as consistent with this edition in the text, while retaining the forms used in critical citations. This also avoids speculation as to Hulme's own preferences.
- 50 See, for example, the reviews by Peter Simpson, *Press*, 1 Sept. 1984; Merata Mita, "Indigenous Literature in a Colonial Society," *The Republican*, 52 (1984); and Joy Cowley, *New Zealand Listener*, May 12, 1984, p. 60, for affirmations of its credibility on various grounds. On the other hand, C.K. Stead, "Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* and the Pegasus Award for Maori Literature," *Ariel*, 16, No. 4 (1985), and Agnes-Mary Brooke "The Bone People Revisited," *The Press*, 27 Sept., 1986, are among those who deny its authenticity and credibility.
- 51 Gunew, "Author-Function," p. 201.
- 52 Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, p. 123.
- 53 Gunew, "Author-Function," p. 201.
- 54 Gunew, "Author-Function," p. 203.

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- 55 Robert Drewe, "Solved: The Great B. Wongar Mystery," *Bulletin Literary Supplement*, 21 April, 1981, p. 2, cited in Ken Gelder and Paul Salzman, *The New Diversity: Australian Fiction 1970-88* (Melbourne: McPhee Gribble, 1989), p. 238.
- 56 Gelder and Salzman, p. 238; also citing Drewe, pp. 2-3.
- 57 Sneja Gunew, "Denaturalizing Cultural Nationalisms" in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 118 (note).
- 58 Mita, p. 4.
- 59 Judith Dale, "the bone people: (Not) Having It Both Ways," *Landfall*, 156, 39, No. 4 (1985), p. 413.
- 60 Stead, pp. 103-104.
- 61 Gayatri Spivak, "Imperialism and Sexual Difference," *Oxford Literary Review*, 8 No. 1-2 (1986), pp. 234-5.
- 62 In her "Why C.K. Stead didn't like Keri Hulme's *the bone people*: Who can write as Other?" *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Canada*, No. 1 (1989), Margery Fee also refers to Sneja Gunew's reference in "Author-Function," to "the ridiculous debates . . . over the extent to which Aboriginal writers have, or have not, a major percentage of Aboriginal blood" (Fee, p. 13).
- 63 Fee, p. 12. This gesture was also noted in discussion of *My Place*, when Sally's right to receive the Aboriginal scholarship is challenged.
- 64 See Fee, p. 15.
- 65 Fee, p. 15.
- 66 Gunew, "Author-function," p. 206.
- 67 Another form of author-centred reading is performed by Susan Ash, who reads *The Bone People* through Hulme's volume of stories, *Te Kaihau*, forming conclusions which presume a unity to the texts that bear the name Keri Hulme. See Susan Ash, "The Bone People After *Te Kaihau*," *World Literature Written in English*, 29, No. 1 (1989), pp. 123-135.
- 68 Diana Wichtel, "Taking Off," *New Zealand Listener*, Nov. 16, 1985, pp. 20-1.
- 69 Stead, p. 105.
- 70 See Wichtel, p. 21.
- 71 Keri Hulme, *The Bone People*, n.p.
- 72 Sneja Gunew, "Migrant Women Writers: Who's on Whose Margins?" *Meanjin*, 42, No. 1 (1983), p. 17.
- 73 Gunew "Denaturalizing," in Bhabha (ed.), p. 113.
- 74 Gunew, "Author-Function," p. 202.
- 75 Gunew, "Migrant Women Writers," pp 16-26.

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- 76 Stead, p. 103.
- 77 Stead, p. 104. This review was written following the award for *The Bone People* of the Pegasus Award for Maori Literature, and before that novel won the Booker prize.
- 78 Gunew, "Author-Function," p. 202.
- 79 Shona Smith, in the interview, "Keri Hulme: Breaking Ground," *Untold*, 2 (1984), argues that "If we agree that there is no one typical woman . . . then we may embrace Kerewin Holmes as a woman rendered both living and realistic by the skill of her creator," p. 44; conversely, Agnes-Mary Brooke claims "Nothing is ordinary about this woman."
- 80 Gunew, "Author-function," p. 208.
- 81 Gunew, "Author-Function," p. 202.
- 82 Gunew, "Author-Function," p. 201.
- 83 Gunew, "Author-Function," p. 201.
- 84 Gelder and Salzman, p. 238.
- 85 Gelder and Salzman, p. 242.
- 86 Elizabeth Webby, "Keri Hulme: Spiralling to Success," *Meanjin*, 44, No. 1 (1985), p. 16.
- 87 Mita, p. 4.
- 88 Stead, p. 103. Elsewhere, though in the context of a very different argument, I have also made the point that the novel is not an indigenous Maori form. See my "Rewriting Their Stories, Renaming Themselves: Post-colonialism and Feminism in the Fictions of Keri Hulme and Audrey Thomas," *SPAN*, No. 23 (1987).
- 89 Stead, p. 107.
- 90 Brooke, p. 19
- 91 Brooke, p. 19
- 92 Mita, p. 4.
- 93 Stead, p. 101.
- 94 Gunew, "Author-Function," p. 208.
- 95 Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, p. 124.
- 96 Fee, "Who can write as Other?" p. 12.
- 97 Gunew, "Author-Function," p. 208.
- 98 Webby, p. 16.
- 99 Mita, p. 5. This reading may also underlie Stead's reservations about the presence of "something black and negative deeply ingrained" in the novel's imaginative fabric. See Stead, p. 107.

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- 100 Dale, p. 413.
- 101 Stead, p. 102.
- 102 Brooke.
- 103 Stead, p. 101.
- 104 Stead, p. 102.
- 105 Hulme, n.p. Whether the ages of 18 years for literary production and 12 years for the 'maturity' of the text are significant may be speculated.
- 106 Hulme, n.p. All of these statements belong to the Preface for which there is no pagination.
- 107 Webby, p. 16.
- 108 Stead, p. 102.
- 109 Stead, p. 102.
- 110 Webby, p. 16.
- 111 Stead, p. 102.
- 112 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 6.
- 113 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 6.
- 114 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 60.
- 115 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 59.
- 116 Gunew, "Author-Function," p. 204.
- 117 Foucault, "What is an Author?" in Josué V. Harari (ed.), *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, (London: Methuen, 1980; Cornell Univ. Press, 1989), p. 159. This is a revision of the essay in *Language, Counter-Memory and Practice*, and ends with some new and different conclusions.
- 118 Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Textual Strategies*, p. 159.
- 119 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Paladin, 1972), p. 148.
- 120 Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Textual Strategies*, p. 159.
- 121 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 64.
- 122 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 64.
- 123 Dale, p. 414.
- 124 Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Textual Strategies*, p. 159.

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- 125 Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, p. 127.
- 126 Gunew, "Author-Function," p. 201. The approbation of a privileged reader is also conferred on *The Bone People*, as Dale reports that "Alice Walker in a letter to Spiral says 'The book is just amazingly wondrously great'" (413).
- 127 Fee, "Who can write as Other?" p. 12.
- 128 Ash, p. 125.
- 129 Stevan Eldred-Grigg, *Oracles and Miracles* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1987).
- 130 Stevan Eldred-Grigg, "Working Class Novel, Okay?" *Sites*, No. 16 (1988), p. 112.
- 131 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 113.
- 132 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 113.
- 133 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 112.
- 134 Williams has pointed out the echo of James Joyce, in "'Would You Like to Be Maori?': Literary Constructions of Oral Culture," *Australian and New Zealand Studies in Canada*, No. 4 (1990), p. 98.
- 135 The theme will be explored further in discussion of Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984). However, it could be pointed out here that the motif is exemplified in the description of the foxes and their pups, in which "If an airplane from the Air Force Training School on the lake came over too low, if a stranger appeared near the pens, if anything too startling or disruptive occurred, they might decide to kill them. Nobody knew whether they did this out of blind irritation, or out of roused and terrified maternal feeling," p. 21. Similarly, the ambivalent action of Sally's mother in *My Place* in telling the children they were Indian both denied them knowledge of their Aboriginal identity, and protected them from that very identification.
- 136 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 117.
- 137 Elizabeth Gordon is critical of the novel for under-representing this aspect of working-class life, in "Oracles and Miracles: Truth or Fiction?" *Untold*, No. 9/10 (1988), pp. 40-66.
- 138 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 113.
- 139 Williams, p. 97.
- 140 Sandra Lee Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," in Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby (eds), *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), p. 64.
- 141 See for example, Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 125.
- 142 See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (trans.) Alan Sheridan, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), pp. 135-169.
- 143 See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 195-228, for a discussion of Panopticism.
- 144 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 111.

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- 145 Pearson, cited in Stevan Eldred-Grigg, "A Bourgeois Blue? Nationalism and Letters from the 1920s to the 1950s," *Landfall*, 163, 41, No. 3 (1987), p. 297.
- 146 Eldred-Grigg, in *Landfall*, p. 297.
- 147 Eldred-Grigg, in *Landfall*, p. 301.
- 148 Eldred-Grigg, in *Landfall*, p. 300.
- 149 Eldred-Grigg, in *Landfall*, p. 295.
- 150 Williams, "'Would You Like to Be Maori?'" p. 97.
- 151 Williams, "'Would You Like to Be Maori?'" p. 103.
- 152 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 111.
- 153 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 116.
- 154 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, pp. 113-4.
- 155 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 114.
- 156 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 112.
- 157 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 116.
- 158 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 114.
- 159 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 119.
- 160 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 112.
- 161 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 116.
- 162 See, for example, Gordon, pp. 43-45.
- 163 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 120.
- 164 Eldred-Grigg, in *Sites*, p. 120.
- 165 Eldred-Grigg, in *Landfall*, p. 301.
- 166 See also Eldred-Grigg in *Landfall*, p. 302, in which he refers to Maud Eaton's, *Girl Workers in New Zealand Factories*, Wellington, 1947, pp. 7, 23, in stating that "An inquiry into the psychology of young women factory workers in 1947 concluded that though most of them suffered from 'acute feelings of inferiority' they gave their life meaning through personal relationships."
- 167 Williams, "'Would You Like to Be Maori?'" p. 94.
- 168 Eldred-Grigg, in *Landfall*, p. 295.

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169 An editor's note to Gordon's "*Oracles and Miracles: Truth or Fiction?*" refers to the acceptance speech made by Eldred-Grigg on winning second place in the 1988 Goodman Fielder Wattie Book Awards.

170 Rosi Braidotti, "Envy: or With Your Brains and My Looks," in Alice Jardine and Paul Smith (eds), *Men in Feminism* (New York, London: Methuen, 1987), p. 235.

171 Elaine Showalter, "Critical Cross-Dressing: Male Feminists and the Woman of the Year," in Jardine and Smith (eds), p. 123.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SELF-MAKING: ARTICULATING AUTHORITY OTHERWISE.

#### 5. I. Introduction.

This chapter considers discourses and textual production from the 'subject-position' of the 'other' in relation to dominant discourses. There are, within these discourses, moments of *resistance* to containment in oppressive and exploitative representations, and more positively, the *production* and *insertion* into the textual economy of the dominant cultures, of discourses of *difference*. The latter constitutes a recuperative or 'redemptive' gesture on the part of marginalised cultural groups which serves both in-group objectives of 'self-making', and broader objectives of author-ising the discourses of 'others', while challenging the (textual and other) structures which have kept them marginalised within the dominant culture and its forms. A principle strategy I explore is the attempt to evoke aspects of (traditional) oral practices and forms in writing. However, I also explore the ambivalence of celebratory and resistant identification with the very characterisations which have informed the processes of 'othering'.

#### 5. II. Representing the Self: Storytelling as Post-Colonial Recuperative Strategy.

Those whose social and cultural positions of dominance assure them readier access to the means of cultural production are more likely to have the products of their discourses *author-ised* through and by textuality, enabling both the specification and demarcation of discursive space, and dissemination of their discourse, thus ensuring the continuation of that authority. Those, on the other hand, whose social position alienates them from the means of (textual) production, are more likely to have their discourses and social products circulate in a more limited, less valorised way. Oral history-making and 'storytelling' within confined discursive communities are features of such 'unauthorised' discursive production and circulation.

Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*<sup>1</sup> and Patricia Grace's *Potiki* share a number of manifest similarities with *Oracles and Miracles*. Both are texts which, like Eldred-Grigg's, privilege orality. *Lives* represents a

female storytelling community, as is posited in *Oracles and Miracles*, and explores some of the same relationships -- in particular, that between mothers and daughters -- similar themes in relation to women's lives, and it employs similar motifs in relation to the production of women's stories. *Potiki* shares with *Oracles and Miracles* the multiple narrative perspectives drawn largely from the members of one family, and the resultant relativisation of point of view. However, unlike *Oracles and Miracles*, both *Lives* and *Potiki* are written from within the subjective stance represented, rather than about or on behalf of it, and this is not simply a factor of authorship, but also of the narrative situation: while Eldred-Grigg's text implies the presence of the outside transcriber, the narratives of *Lives* and *Potiki* are produced and authorised from within their own discursive communities. In this way, they enact the necessity posited in post-colonial discourse of discerning the meaning of discourse in relation to the situation of its production. Therefore, if *Oracles and Miracles* can be seen as constituting an act of appropriative identification and idealisation, *Lives* and *Potiki*, although bearing numerous thematic and structural similarities to it, are read as textual acts of resistance to imposed socio-discursive positioning within the dominant discursive formations.

Munro and Grace foreground, in these texts, the act of storytelling, not as capitulation to hegemonic literary expectations, nor in an act of privileging marginality *per se* over authority, but as an 'argument' for the constitution of meaning through discursive situation and historicisation. In constructing discourses in resistance they both stake claims to discursive territory, and constitute subversive discursive terrain. For example, as it will be shown, the search for 'voice' in writing, and the use of the 'feminine' and 'folk' crafts of weaving and carving as metaphors for textual production can be re-read as gestures of empowerment, imbuing these forms with authority, and as strategic subversions of dominant cultural hierarchies of value -- art over craft, authority over orality -- within the current institutions of cultural and reading practices. Similarly, as well as investing de-privileged forms with new authority and new meaning, acts of (inter)textuality subvert traditional narrative forms of containment by the 'inappropriate' *mimicry* of them.<sup>2</sup> Thus the storytelling structure and motifs of *Lives* and *Potiki* effect the privileging of discursive process over product, and the historicisation of the texts through reference to the subject-positions out of which they arise, allowing

the contestatory meanings and significance of their textual strategies to be discerned.

For example, at the time of publication in 1971, much of Munro's exploration in the text of women's relationship to desire and to cultural production was new to public discourse. She has noted, in relation to *Lives*, that "'It just occurred to me once that I wanted to write the kind of thing about a young girl's sexual experience that had been written about boys.'"<sup>3</sup> This sentiment, and its realisation in *Lives*, coincided with the rise of women's visible political and cultural activism. Her text was therefore transgressive in its admission and celebration of the inadmissible within patriarchy: that women could be subjects of their own desires and their own discourses, not simply objects of men's.<sup>4</sup> This claiming of subjectivity as female implies the *specificity* of that subjectivity, defining it as a region within some idealist subjective totality. As I argue in Chapter Six, this notion is consistent with patriarchal conceptions of subjectivity, and thus its representation in women's contestatory texts must be read as descriptive, evoking the symptomatic status of discourses of resistance, and at the same time, to the extent that women are the Other of patriarchy, as critical. However, more positively, the notion of female subjectivity as a region within patriarchy can also be seen as consistent with the feminist/post-colonial demand for *situated* discourse and reading practices, as well as incorporating the element of gender into the recognised importance of 'place' in post-colonial writing.<sup>5</sup>

Although it was published a decade and a half later, in 1986, in *Potiki* many of the same discursive features and textual strategies can be found. Along with a broader crisis of post-colonial legitimacy for Pakeha cultural and political supremacy, there has been a resurgence of Maori activism and a cultural renaissance. This has created a context in which Maori literature increasingly challenges its containment within the Pakeha institutional creation of a national literature, serving as a store of symbols and source of indigenising 'local colour'.

There has been wide critical discussion of whether *Lives* is properly a novel, an 'episodic' novel, or a collection of linked stories. The terms of such discussion are more revealing than any solution posited. As well as a 'novel' and 'stories', *Lives* has been described as a "scrapbook of anecdotes" and a "collection of autobiographical sketches."<sup>6</sup> However, as

Martin points out, the question invokes a hierarchisation of literary forms which privilege the novel.<sup>7</sup> As Helen Tiffin has stated, "European literary criticism has traditionally measured 'good literature' by an unrelativised 'universality' whose general claims and assumptions have now been exposed by a number of critics as the hegemonising tactics of a particular cultural group."<sup>8</sup> At the same time, stories are denigrated as limited and feminine, more akin to a craft, with its manual associations, than an art, with its more intellectual implications. Munro herself is complicit in such a judgement. She once told Graeme Gibson in an interview that she writes on a single string, rather than manipulating a lot of strings at once like a true novelist. Specifically, she felt that, "the sections could almost stand as short-stories. They're all a little bit too loose, but this seemed to be the only way I could work, and I think this is the way I'll have to write books."<sup>9</sup> However, *Lives* can be argued to have taken on the 'feminine' label and mimicked its terms, thereby displacing its force of containment. For example, women's 'life-writing', an apt description of Munro's *bildungs-/künstlerroman* -- has been decried as "disconnected, fragmentary, or organized into self-sustained units rather than connecting chapters."<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the evocation of communal orality and the range of craft metaphors to describe the text have been noted in Rapsorich's observation that "the stories are structured and linked by parallel crises and parallel points of view. Thus relativity is central to the aesthetic in *Lives*, likening it to the crocheted squares combined to make an afghan." More generally of the short-story as female form, she argues that "As a work in miniature, the short-story, like a needle-point square, demands flawless execution,"<sup>11</sup> while Godard discovers patchwork quilting as a key image in women's texts, symbolising the intertextuality of their narrative technique.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, *Potiki* is structured into stories, defined largely by their narrative point of view, evoking the oral folk tradition deprivileged by literary art. There are 'stories' and 'storytellers' rather than 'chapters'. Thus although it does not posit an exclusively women's storytelling tradition or its re-enactment in the post-colonial present, and although it is not solely or even principally women's lives that are being told, the text is 'feminised' by its implication in culture's feminine Other, the "Other culture, which is traditionally interpreted as female 'folk' life."<sup>13</sup> This is precisely what Eldred-Grigg chose to 'recognise' and celebrate in *Oracles and Miracles*. Therefore, more important than finding the most

appropriate genre in which to place the texts is the acknowledgement of the questions they raise about the notion of genre itself.

How, then, does the apparent conformity of these texts to the very positions or status with which they are conferred within the patriarchal hegemony of western institutions, constitute a possible position of resistance as opposed to mere containment? By recognising the centrality of subject-position to the meaning of discourse, it is possible to see how these texts enact, in their representation of a 'folk' or 'women's' culture, both a "celebration of womanly [and Maori] things," and "feminist [and Maori] comment and protest."<sup>14</sup> For example, the 'celebration' could be seen as occurring in the structuring and motifs of the texts, while the 'comment and protest' are discerned in the themes. Finally, the status of this evocation of orality and folk culture as *mimicry*, manifesting slippage between the discourse and its effects and thus constituting it as ambivalent, is clear in its employment within *literary texts*, so that these 'marginalised' cultures negotiate and articulate positions both within and other than literary authority. Therefore, orality and folk crafts are not purely marginal, and literary authority is no longer purely patriarchal and post-colonising. There is a 'feminine' undecidability to the 'body' of these texts, isomorphic with a feminine subjectivity.<sup>15</sup> By eluding labels such as 'novel', 'chapter' and 'story', they destabilise rigid genre classification, existing in the gaps between which hegemonic patriarchal western literary discourse finds difficult to name. In eluding the name, they elude its controlling, containing, objectifying force, and thus function as resistant, disturbing texts.

Within the sections of *Lives*, whether these are seen as stories or chapters, there is a complex enactment of storytelling processes. Throughout the novel characters share stories, characters become stories, and stories received from literary, scientific, religious and many other traditions influence and shape characters' lives. Through Del Jordan's narrative, we see these storymaking processes construct the world in which she lives and simultaneously construct her as part of that world. Some stories have greater cultural authority than others, and although the narrative as a whole presents Del as the locus of conflict between them, negotiating and eventually subverting the traditional hierarchy of value, the presentation of the stories in the text itself occurs in such a way that they weave together, resisting hierarchical ordering into such terms as

'plot' and 'sub-plot'. The story of Del's development as an artist is inextricably involved with the story of her development as a young woman, rendering it again undecidable between the genres of *bildungsroman* and *künstlerroman*, as suggested earlier. This weaving together evokes the posited inseparability of body and subjectivity in the construction of discourse. Del is not so much *both* a woman *and* a writer, as a womanwriter. However, neither 'woman' nor 'writer' is a monolithic or idealist category, but rather the product of multiple stories. Del's narration is the locus of the meeting of all the stories that have gone before to construct her (the history of her subjectivity), and the stories created in her challenges to these (the ways in which she refuses interpellation). In short, she is the site of their meeting, conflict, resolution and problematisation. The text becomes fabric which exists only in the inter-relation of warp and weft. It can continue to be woven in any direction, as the stories can continue to be told. There are stories present in the text only as allusion or rumour, unfixed and unfixable by substantiation (101; 150), or unable to be shared (158). All can be likened to loose ends of story that have the potential to be woven into the fabric, but always resisting final closure.

The endless construction of stories in *Lives* implies the endless construction of reality through language; it is not stable and out-there, but always coming into being through the subject's relation to it. Early in the text, and in her life, Del confronts the existence of multiple truths. The stories suggested by the newspaper headlines she reads at Uncle Benny's house seem tantalisingly possible when she is in his environment. The otherness of the reality they represent is in place in the otherness of Uncle Benny's house, "at the edge of the bush -- the bush that turned into swamp . . . -- . . . tall and silvery, old unpainted boards, bleached dry in the summer, and dark green blinds, cracked and torn, pulled down over all the windows" (2). However, the closer she gets to home, the less possible they seem. Similarly, Uncle Benny "told stories, in which there was nearly always something happening that my mother would insist could not have happened" (9). The stability of truth is further questioned when, having heard her mother's stories about Uncle Bill as a child, "the terrible fat boy, so gifted in cruelty, so cunning, quick, fiendish, so much to be feared" (87), Del meets him as a dying old man whose stories, and storybook excesses of generosity cause her to reflect, "I kept looking at him, trying to pull that boy out of the yellowish man. But I could not find him there" (87).

The storytelling among women represented and celebrated in Del's narrative emphasises the constitution of non-hierarchical oral discursive community. Rapsorich argues that "Munro substantiates . . . Brownmiller's point that women prefer equality and community in discussion, rather than the hierarchy of leader and led discourse."<sup>16</sup> Del's great-aunts Elspeth and Grace tell stories which do more than impart information or entertain an audience. The act of telling the stories links the sisters not only by drawing on common pasts, but in the present, in the act of sharing the story-telling voice. For example, in telling the story of the foreign "hired man" their father had had, they call on each others' memories, constantly interrupt each other, both support and challenge each others' interpretations of events, and add things the other has omitted (33). The narrating of these stories is invariably good-humoured, and the aunts continue to enjoy the mirth they engender, sometimes even indulging in some new joke or trick that has arisen out of the context and the act of their storytelling (see 34-5). The centrality of the bonding function over the story itself is noted by Del when she says: "It did not seem as if they were telling them to me, to entertain me, but as if they would have told them anyway, for their own pleasure, even if they had been alone" (33).

That such stories are produced out of a 'women's' culture is demonstrated in the context of rigidly demarcated, and again celebrated, notion of women's domestic work:

The veranda where they sat in the afternoons, having completed morning marathons of floor scrubbing, cucumber hoeing, potato digging, bean and tomato picking, canning, pickling, washing, starching, sprinkling, ironing, waxing, baking. They were not idle sitting there; their laps were full of work -- cherries to be stoned, peas to be shelled, apples to be cored. Their hands, their old, dark, wooden-handled paring knives, moved with marvelous, almost vindictive speed. (32)

Despite the sheer amount of work described, the evocation of produce and productivity, the suggestion of plentitude and of a self-satisfied efficiency and sense of achievement, contrasts greatly with the representation in *Oracles and Miracles* of struggle to amass sufficient food out of meagre resources, and body-breaking labour which merely kept the Feron in the standard of poverty to which they were accustomed. Further, 'storytelling' in any entertaining or frivolous sense, was virtually unknown in the

Feron household. Mum Feron's few stories recognisable as such, provoke amazement in Ginnie and Fag: Me and Fag sort of gaped at each other. Mum had told us a story!" (31), and her own self-conscious discomfort: "'You kids git!' she said. 'What jer think this is, a mick confessional?'" (31).

The physicality of the aunts' work -- both its reference to the needs and comforts of the body, and its accomplishment by way of bodily skill and activity -- parallels the depiction of the physical energy and the 'bodily' orality of their storytelling. It is evoked in the use of textual devices such as italics and exclamation marks. Similarly, Del's own fascination with the sounds of words foregrounds the orality of her conception of language. She experiments with the sounds of words: "'Day-ud cow,' I said, expanding the word lusciously. 'Day-ud cow, day-ud cow'" (44). She contemplates "Heart *attack*. It sounded like an explosion, like fireworks going off" (46), and notes that her mother's voice was clear and dangerous: "just by using a word like *barbaric*, she could make a pool of silence, of consternation around her" (56). The stories produced out of this orality contrast with Uncle Craig's family tree and written history of Wawanash County. While the stories of the aunts enact their relatedness in the telling, both to each other and to their audience, Craig's family tree, on which he works in protected isolation, records the skeletal details of dates of birth, marriage and death. Similarly, his long historical manuscript records the past with an apparently arbitrary sense of priorities. Descriptions of the weather on a particular day could receive as weighty attention as anything else in his attempt to compile the whole history of the County. The will to objectivity and totality in his history paradoxically requires that he *exclude* any discernible point-of-view. His history is thus unsituated and dehistoricised. Its transcendent voice is monologic and closed, colonising and naming an "'irrevocably interpreted past,'"<sup>17</sup> dealing a death blow to voice, and thus necessarily 'other' voices. It is in death that Craig can be tropologically linked to his writing. As Del looks at his body under the blanket of lilies, she describes him as "the terrible, silent, indifferent conductor of forces that could flare up, in an instant, and burn through this room, all reality, leave us dark" (58).

The early suspicion with which Del regarded writing related to its tendency to bring to her stories from far beyond her own experience, yet the suspicion was combined with an attraction to the very power writing



had to do this. However, as she grows older and the social construction of sexual difference starts to impinge more and more on her self-image and options, the suspicion is accompanied by a sense of vulnerability to the power. Describing the hatred of boys for girls, she says: "The things they said stripped away freedom to be what you wanted, reduced you to what it was they saw, and that, plainly, was enough to make them gag" (115). She begins to see power and writing concentrating largely in the hands of boys and men. She finds that while men do most of the writing, much of the writing is about women, and it both objectifies and controls them. Uncle Benny's marriage to Madeleine is arranged through an exchange of letters between Benny and Madeleine's brother. Later Del is disturbed to read a magazine article by a Freudian psychologist discussing the different reactions of boys and girls on looking at the moon. She does not identify with the description of a girl's thoughts, and becomes confused, believing a Freudian psychologist must *know* - more than she knows herself (177). Similarly, Mr Chamberlain's note, "Del is a bad girl" (160), disturbs her with its authority. She believes it could expose the hidden truth about herself. Jerry Storey transmits male stories about female intelligence, delimiting its power and patronising Del. What she had was, he said, "a first-rate memory, a not unusual feminine gift for language, fairly weak reasoning powers, and almost no capacity for abstract thought" (193). Finally, when Garnet French, whom Del describes as "the solid intrusion of the legendary into the real world" (211), eventually expects Del to submit to his religious beliefs and practices, her shocked rejection of him is a rejection of the master-narrative which he embodies.

However, women's oral storytelling, while constituting and relying on community in the transmission of a folk culture, also reveals a dark underside in its own implication in patriarchal discursive dichotomies. Communities are linked through exclusion of 'outsiders', just as 'place' is defined through a conception of some region 'beyond'. Del both participates in, and is aware of the way individuals and communities make stories out of events, and turn people into legends, thus shaping their meaning or the way they will be remembered. Soon after Madeleine's departure, Uncle Benny reshapes his role in the end of the relationship by choosing to remember her as someone discarded, to laugh over, like a character in a story or a play, and she eventually becomes known as "Madeleine. That Madwoman" (27). As Del says, "We

remembered her like a story, and having nothing else to give we gave her our strange, belated, heartless applause" (27). When Miss Farris drowns, the speculation in the *Jubilee Herald-Advance* serves to avert the threatening suggestion of suicide. The townspeople prefer to create stories of murder (the act of an unknown outsider), or accident, repressing any explanation which may force them to confront the inadmissible elements of love or sexuality in relation to her, or their own lives. Throughout the text, stories and rumours circulate, such as those about the members of the Sherriff family discussed by Del's mother and Fern Dougherty, though in Del's presence (100-101). By setting up scapegoats representing what is considered abnormal, undesirable, or unfortunate in the community, these stories create a sense of normality and bonding within the rest of the community. They create the 'other' against which the 'self' is defined. Del's mother's consistent belief in the essential otherness of burglars (91-2), is consistent with a dichotomised reality which is (critically) represented in *Lives*, invoking the literary form of the gothic.

In the small town of Jubilee, order is opposed to chaos, town to country, same to different, 'us' to 'them'. There are characters representing the traditional dark 'villains' of gothic: Uncle Benny is described as having "a heavy black moustache, fierce eyes, a delicate predatory face," and as being "a steadfast eccentric" (2).<sup>18</sup> The gothic is also suggested in the shadows of horror and violence which inhabit the inevitable narratives of women's sexuality and childbirth. Naomi tells Del that "if a girl has to get married, she either dies having [the baby], or she nearly dies, or else there is something the matter with it. Either a harelip or clubfoot or it isn't right in the head. My mother has seen it" (117). A sceptical Del reflects that "Naomi's mother was a practical nurse. On her authority -- or what Naomi claimed was her authority -- I had heard that babies born with cauls will turn out to be criminals" (117). An horrific story of childbirth explains Mary Agnes Oliphant's simpleness, and as a result Del feels that "the gloom spreading out from Aunt Moira had a gynaecological odor" (40). Later Del reads in Fern's assorted papers about "a poor farmer's wife in North Carolina throwing herself under a wagon when she discovered she was going to have her ninth child, about women dying in tenements from complications of pregnancy or childbirth or terrible failed abortions. . . ." (163). Even if these things happen to 'other' women, 'elsewhere', they hang as warnings or threats over the lives of 'all' women.<sup>19</sup>

However, as has been noted by Rapsorich and Howells, *Lives* belongs to a resistant tradition of *female* gothic. Howells argues that

Del's dissatisfaction with the traditional gothic stems from her perceptions of what it neglects, for not only does it leave out ordinariness but more importantly for her it leaves out women's sexuality. Gothic fiction is obsessed with sex, but stories of heroines fleeing male predators elaborately displace female knowledge into fictions of feminine fear and innocence, refusing to recognize physical desire as a strong component in women's sexual fantasies.<sup>20</sup>

The specification of a female gothic in contestation of the patriarchal tradition results in the discernment of writing "primarily concerned with definitions of female sexuality and the role of the female in patriarchal culture. Partly a subversive fiction, it nonetheless apes the values and images of male culture."<sup>21</sup> However, just as Bhabha's formulation of mimicry as a disturbance or ambivalence in authority constitutes it as a resistance effect, Rapsorich notes of female gothic, as it is enacted in *Lives*, that "Although the fiction reproduces the status of women in patriarchal culture, it is meant as feminist accusation."<sup>22</sup> Thus female gothic implies in itself the necessity of determining the meaning of discourse in relation to the subject position out of which it is produced.

Del is eager for sexual knowledge and sexual experience. She is intrigued by the experience of her own body as sexual (149; 200), and her sexual fantasies range from the childish narratives she constructs with Naomi about 'F.A.'s' (Fatal Attractions) (133), to the private and elaborate fantasies about Mr Chamberlain (151). She seeks physical sexual experience with Mr Chamberlain (166), and ultimately Garnet French (223-4). Yet her sexual desire is not the same sado-masochistic desire for submission to men and to men's construction of desire in women that is found in traditional gothic. She is not impressed by the sight of Mr Chamberlain's genitals, as he clearly expects she should be (166-7), and although she complies for her own reasons with Jerry Storey's wishes, she finds the idea of intimacy with him "offensive" (199). Listening to opera, she finds her passions and fantasies aroused. However, she imagines

Voluptuous surrender. Not to a man but to fate, really, to darkness, to death. Yet I loved most of all *Carmen*, at the end. *Et laisser moi passer!* I hissed it between my teeth; I was shaken, imagining the other surrender, more tempting, more gorgeous even than the surrender to sex -- the hero's, the patriot's, Carmen's surrender to the final importance of gesture, image, self-created self. (181)

Similarly, as has been shown, her sexual experience with Garnet French resulting in her loss of virginity still does not represent, or result in, her submission to him. In these refusals, she is differentiated from the more traditional gothic heroine-victims, Marion Sherriff and Miss Farris.

On the other hand, Del resists her mother's refusal of sexuality, and of mystery and passion. In this, *Lives* exemplifies the tendency of female gothic to involve conflict with the all-powerful Mother. Reversing the usual formulation of this relation, in which the mother represents the fate of the girl who heeds her sexual self, Del's sexual self is almost something she fosters in order not to become like her completely rational mother (94); and just as her mother deflects consideration of the spiritual mysteries of death with her animistic account of bodies as "Combinations of elements" and Uncle Craig's as eventually "flowers" (47), her discussions of sexuality are, for Del, either depressingly grim, or embarrassingly practical. She exhorts Del, "'Use your brains. Don't be distracted. Once you make that mistake, of being -- distracted, over a man, your life will never be your own. You will get the burden, a woman always does'" (173). Yet she has also written to the *Jubilee Herald-Advance*, arguing that "'prophylactic devices should be distributed to all women on public relief in Wawanash County, to help them prevent any further increase in their families'" (173).

Del's perception of reality is not so dichotomised. The boundaries between inside and outside, us and them, are unstable. Her family lives on the Flats Road which is neither inside nor outside, but on the edge of the town. It is only an act of will on her mother's part in insisting that they lived "at the end of the Flats Road" (7), that separates them from its bootleggers, prostitutes, idiots. But Del discovers that the ordinary and the strange inhere in each other: "People's lives, in Jubilee as elsewhere, were dull, simple, amazing, and unfathomable -- deep caves paved with kitchen linoleum" (249). She experiences her own and her mother's 'otherness' in the Jubilee community, and conversely, the surprising 'normality' of the prostitutes at the end of the road:

I wished I had seen more of this Peggy than the soft, mouse-brown nest of curls above the paper; I wished I had seen her face. I did expect something -- a foul shimmer of corruption, some emanation, like marsh gas. I was surprised, in a way, that she would read a paper, that the words in it would mean the same things to her, presumably, as they did to the rest of us, that she ate and drank, was human still.  
(150)

In her development into a writer, Del is therefore heir to two traditions. The stories told by her aunts are, by extension, her stories of family history, through her relatedness to them and through the process of narrative bonding -- the relating of them. However, Del and her aunts retain an ambivalent attitude to writing. It is, after all, Aunts Elspeth and Grace who, though they laughed at it, also respected men's work. Thus they protected Uncle Craig from interruption when he was writing. Though they intended to give Uncle Craig's written history to Owen to finish "because he's a boy" (61), they eventually acknowledge Del's "knack for writing compositions" (61), and she inherits it. This dismays Del, who describes the manuscript as "so dead to me, so heavy and dull and useless that I thought it might deaden my things and bring me bad luck" (62). Del's 'things' are her own writing, for although the manuscript is eventually destroyed, Del does not reject writing completely. Her ambivalence at the loss of Uncle Craig's manuscript is clear when she says, "I felt remorse, that kind of tender remorse which has on its other side a brutal, unblemished satisfaction" (62). She wants to write a novel, but cannot do so until she has worked through her fear of writing as a process of exclusion. She reflects in the Epilogue that she would eventually become "Voracious and misguided as Uncle Craig . . . writing his history" (249), attempting her own exhaustive lists in the futile hope of accuracy. Like Uncle Craig, she wants "every last thing" (249), but the things she strives for, "every layer of speech and thought, stroke of light on bark or walls, every smell, pothole, pain, crack, delusion" (249) are drawn not from written documents as his were, but from memory and perception. Thus while they derive from the intertextuality of stories which comprise her memory and subjectivity, they differ from the putative objectivity of Uncle Craig's chronicle of facts. Her attempt at inclusiveness derives not from a desire to fix and name reality once and for all, but to include all possible points of view. Her ultimate acceptance that she can only 'write what she knows' follows the relativising of her own subjectivity through a recognition of other possible stories.

Del must break into the culturally valorised and powerful form of writing, undermining the dominance of the male voice, to tell her own stories. It could be argued that, strategically, demands for equality, such as that implicit in her determination to write, "are not simply that -- they also necessarily comport a threat and a resistance to dominatory structures."<sup>23</sup> But Del's task is greater. Without positing an essential femininity, her

writing recognises the culturally and historically determined absence of some subject-positions within the 'dominant discourse'. Their insertion is in itself an act of historicisation, relativising the ostensibly universal discourse of patriarchy. Thus her writing is finally able to foreground the legacies of the storytelling shared among women such as Fern and her mother, her aunts Elspeth and Grace, and Del and her own friends -- her fascination with the sounds of words, the semantic possibilities and dimensions of phrases, and her sensitivity to the use of specific words by specific people -- in short, the story-telling *situation* itself.

Storytelling has also been central to indigenous cultures whose traditional cultural production was primarily oral in form. Patricia Grace's *Potiki* articulates the need of the New Zealand Maori people to take back the discursive power which, after nearly 150 years of cultural and political marginalisation through colonisation, has been concentrated in the hands of the Pakeha. But addressing the cultural dominance of writing, its power to name, and to fix and disseminate its naming of reality, *Potiki* represents in textual form a challenge to, and decentering of, the colonising claims to universality of Pakeha stories, Pakeha cultural forms. The reintroduction, indeed celebration of oral storytelling practices poses a strategic challenge to the textual hegemony which both facilitated and accompanied colonisation. *Potiki* thus shares with *Lives* the multiplicity of stories and the self-conscious storymaking of the characters. These include the many stories of traditional legend, ancestral and recent history, the impact, both general and local, of colonisation on Maori culture and beliefs, and the struggle for Maori survival in and challenge to Pakeha-dominated New Zealand. In *Potiki*, stories and storytellers replace chapters and narrator. Some are defined by the storyteller, others are defined by the story, or the characters on whom the story focuses. The stories intersperse the voices of a number of storytellers, though principally Roimata and Tokowaru (Toko). Foregrounding the multiplicity and specificity of voice, the text represents individual speech characteristics. Mary's pronunciation is transcribed -- "'I got suffing in my bag'" (17) -- and her characteristic phrases, "pretty and nice" or "beautiful and nice" become chants repeated over and over as she polishes the carvings. Thus Mary, whose limitations prevent her in other ways from telling her stories, still has a voice. Granny Tamihana's speech combines both English and Maori language, and English language with Maori idiom, both seen in a phrase such as "'When you had your cup of tea and a kai'" (20). This variety of

perspectives prevents the emergence of a single controlling narrative voice, and when the different narratives of different characters focus on a particular event or set of events, point of view is privileged over hierarchical notions of authority. The textual representation of oral storymaking draws on traditional practices and patterns, not simply to reverse the hierarchy of privilege, but to reintroduce the suppressed element of a potential dialectic into dominant discursive production.

Stories which evolve and are transmitted orally often consist of traditional formulaic structures which serve as 'writing' to preserve them both in the general cultural context and the individual memory.<sup>24</sup> In *Potiki* stories are often shaped and shared on the basis of repeated patterns of acting or telling. Telling his 'big fish' story, Toko adds: "'Well I don't really remember Tangimoana staring at my face, but I know that's what she always does'" (48). He makes word associations with times and events to prompt stories from his memory: "'Vine' and 'brine' were both new words to me then, and these words quickly recall that time for me whenever I hear them'" (57). However, not subject to the fixity of print, stories evolve and adapt with the storytelling context, and thus are continually and inextricably enmeshed in a process of historicisation. Roimata narrates: "In the evenings the Te Ope people talked about their struggles of the past, of their new work, and of their hopes and dreams. They were not new stories to us, except that stories are always new, or else there is always something new in stories" (132). Stories also evolve in relation to the personality of the storyteller. Again, Toko's big fish story illustrates this, when he says: "'Then Hemi cut off its head that was as big as my own head, or that's how I remember it'" (51). Characters and stories in *Potiki* are therefore linked in a dialectic of mutual definition, evoking the centrality of discourse to subjectivity, and subjectivity to discourse.

Paradoxically contained and absent within Pakeha cultural representation, finding and telling their own stories is seen by the characters in *Potiki* as integral to their self-definition and survival. This is most clearly demonstrated in Manu's fear that because he cannot find his stories at school, he will disappear through the cracks in the floor. His mother Roimata keeps him at home, saying "I remembered that everything we needed was here . . . . We just needed to live our lives, seek out our stories, and share them with each other" (38). The loss of self and stories can be seen in a number of characters who embark on a rediscovery

of both, but the individual subjectivity foregrounded in the representation of orality is structurally situated within a collective process of sharing and concomitant formation of community in and by storytelling. Just as the Tamihana family as individuals and as a whole are the meeting points of all these stories, they meet together to tell the stories. Therefore, as with *Lives*, weaving serves as a valuable metaphor for the production, structure and relationships of the stories which make up *Potiki*. However in the latter it is a self-conscious structural and thematic element. In traditional Maori culture, weaving is largely a women's activity.<sup>25</sup> Women tell stories as they weave, just as the Aunts in *Lives* told stories as they carried out their domestic tasks. Toko, who joins the women in weaving because his physical disabilities prevent him from doing heavy work, describes the weaving of panels for the new meeting house following the destruction of the old: "As the strands worked to and fro, so did our stories . . . . We sang to and fro, latticing down and along the strips of black, red, white and gold, which had become the strands of life and self" (144). There are also traditional weaving chants one of which is often used, as it is in *Potiki*, in the context of funeral oratory: "'And now let there be joining - the dead to the dead, the living to the living. Let the strands fall together. . .'" (28). The inter-relation of warp and weft parallel the inter-relation of stories, and the gathering of the women to weave parallels the meeting to tell stories, and the collectivity of identity sought through their sharing. Orality is thus represented in the group context essential to its existence and preservation.

The valorisation of wholeness possibly seen as implicit in the metaphor of weaving, and in the notion of collective identity, is only problematic when the product is privileged over the process. But in *Potiki*, it is the process of collectively reconstituting a fragmented social and discursive community which enables the 'dominant discourse' to be challenged, its terms renegotiated in relation to 'other', but not fixed realities. We have seen that the post-colonial historicising imperative is strategically addressed through oral forms. At the same time, views of history 'itself' are problematised. Redefinitions of the present depend on redefinitions of the past, and on conceptions of the relation between them.

In *Lives*, the storytelling of the Aunts blurred the distinction between past and present. In *Potiki*, this occurs in the context of a traditional non-linear conception of time and history,<sup>26</sup> articulated by the narrating voice



which declares that the past is "your jumping-off place that tells you where you'll land. The past is the future" (94). While a differentiation is made between past, present and future, it is only the differentiation of strands in a woven fabric. Their importance, or meaning, comes through their interrelation in the shifting present. Roimata says of the 'given' stories of the past: "It was a new discovery to find that these stories were, after all, about our own lives, were not distant, that there was no past or future, that all time is now-time, centred in the being" (39). It is in the context of these understandings of time that the novel interweaves sections set in, or dealing with different recent historical periods and the present, and that within and beyond these, the distant legendary past and the future of prophecy provide even greater depth of understanding of the present. The endless present of repeated patterns recalls the spiralling patterns woven into panels. Thus each story is "a story not of a beginning or end, but marking only a position on the spiral" (180).

Family history is a living, articulated knowledge. Unlike Uncle Craig's family tree in *Lives*, which is destined to remain silent on paper, and eventually to be destroyed, the family genealogies in *Potiki* are recited on ceremonial occasions (25). The children visit and speak to their buried ancestors as if they are present, and in many ways the ancestors are present. They are there in the living wood from which they are carved, and this presence is underscored in the concept of "tupuna.". As explained by Johansen in a Danish anthropological study: "this word unites in it all the generations which have set up and still set up the standards by which the kinship group lives. We have set forth this view as regards the departed; but the grandparents are the living representatives of custom and common practice."<sup>27</sup>

While weaving served as a metaphor for the collectivity and interrelation of stories, the metaphor of carving, an activity which is traditionally carried out solely by men,<sup>28</sup> applies to other aspects of storymaking. A carving, unlike a European artifact, is not to be looked at alone for its value. The mana of a carving is increased by the stories that are told with it.<sup>29</sup> In the prologue of *Potiki*, the carver is also a storyteller: "They came especially to listen to his stories which were of living wood, his stories of the ancestors. He told also the histories of patterns and the meanings of patterns to life" (10). The physicality of speech<sup>30</sup> is represented in the carvings of great storytellers: "His tongue is long and

fine and swirling, the tongue of a great storyteller" (11). Carving and storytelling are further linked in the rhythm or movement, the *mauri*, which can be heard in their crafting. In the final section of *Potiki* we are told that "The ones who work in words or wood listen for the beat that words and wood have" (184). In order to be the subjects of their own discourse, the smothering wood of Pakeha Eurocentric and racist mythology must be hewn away to allow the Maori past and Maori values beneath to 'breathe'. Subsequent change is a part of a living, rather than a preserved or museumified, culture.

Therefore, *Potiki* is not simply a novel of return. As Tiffin has pointed out, "there is no possibility of a return to or a rediscovery of a pre-colonial cultural purity, nor the possibility of the manufacture of national or regional formations independent of their implication in the European historical enterprise."<sup>31</sup> Echoing through the text is the phrase, "'The stories are changing'" (70), and Maori traditional values and customs change and adapt as they interact with those of the Pakeha to produce new syncretic post-colonial realities. For example, Christian and Maori religious or spiritual beliefs merge in the story of Toko's birth. His mother is unexpectedly, but undoubtedly Mary, while his father could be the vagrant Joseph Williams (Joe-billy), or it could be the ancestral carving with which she has a loving relationship. Toko's "special knowing" and sacrificial death further mirror Christian beliefs.<sup>32</sup> However, the Maori demi-god Maui was, like Toko, the last-born of his family; he is, like Toko, found in and taken from the sea; and he has special powers, but dies in the quest for immortality.<sup>33</sup> The names of the novel's characters further evoke syncretism, some being Maori (Manu, Tangimoana, Roimata), some being Maori transliterations (Hemi, Rupena, Matiu), and some Pakeha (Mary, Reuben).

New stories arise from the interaction of old and new events, and the meeting house symbolises this not only in its function of bringing people together, but also in its spiritual and physical structure. Symbolically, the central roof beam and those pointing down from it are the backbone and the ribs of an ancestor.<sup>34</sup> But going beyond mere physical symbolism, those gathered in the meeting house experienced "the warmth of embrace, because the house is a parent, and there was warmth in under the the parental backbone, enclosure among the patterned ribs" (88). Thus the new stories are told in the *body* of the traditional past. James eventually

becomes a carver who finishes the unfinished carving of the prologue. Manu, who symbolises the loss of discursive subjectivity following the marginalisation of language, skills and beliefs effected by colonisation, also refocuses the need for healing collectivity. The fight to save and eventual need to rebuild the destroyed meeting house is also the fight for the right to tell their stories. Roimata says, "We were busy telling and retelling the stories and histories of a people and a place, and learning or relearning a language which was our own, so that we could call it our own again. We worked for our own survival" (107).

Part of that struggle has been the adapting of old ways to the new conditions, which is reflected in the continual recasting and retelling of stories. Those who are strong are asked by the whanau to learn from the Pakeha world skills which will be used to enable Maori survival in that world. Tangimoana studies law so that it can be used for, rather than against her people. Although writing was brought by the Pakeha, and has largely served Pakeha interests, its value in preserving history and disseminating stories can be, indeed as the text seems to argue, *must* be appropriated by Maori. It was finding old letters about legal proceedings that enabled new evidence to be brought to the Te Ope land issue. Redressing the imbalance which showed little or no Maori in Pakeha books, Roimata and the children make their own. Roimata says: We could not afford books so we made our own. In this way we were able to find ourselves in books. It is rare for us to find ourselves in books, but in our own books we were able to find and define our lives (104). Conversely, they watched little television because "There was little indication through television that we existed at all in our own land" (105).

Del's task in *Lives* was continually to negotiate the two traditions to which she was heir, metonymically represented through the writing of Uncle Craig, and the oral storytelling of Aunts Elspeth and Grace, effecting a dialectic between them. Similarly, *Potiki* is a textual enactment of Maori and Pakeha cultural forms, using both English and Maori language, and combining the two activities of weaving and carving, as material process and narrative metaphor, to symbolise the entry of both Maori women and men, and traditional Maori art forms, into Pakeha-dominated literature. Both *Lives* and *Potiki* enter the powerful and valorised discursive form of text to tell their own, hitherto largely suppressed stories of alterity. Both foreground oral storytelling practices to present or evoke many voices,

exposing and challenging the monologism of patriarchal and imperial authority, and also to recuperate the marginalised discursive and creative traditions and practices of those whose subjectivity is suppressed by the 'dominant discourse', those who could not find themselves or hear their voices in books.

### 5. III. Constructing the Truth of the Resisting Self: Post-Colonial Autobiography.

Although it was argued in Chapter One that no 'subject' fully inhabits any one discourse, and no one discourse is sufficient to any 'subject', such plenitudinous 'fits' are frequently constructed to, or posited within, not only discourses of oppression, but apparently paradoxically, discourses of resistance. It is therefore necessary to address the question of how those discourses which derive from 'marginal' subject positions have gained a certain privilege, such that the discourses of women, indigenous peoples, sexual minorities, the working classes, are variously actively solicited. In the context of the active solicitation of the once suppressed discourse of the post-colonised by the post-colonisers, there is a shadow cast by the now familiar question of *Who May Speak as Other*: the darker form which both inhabits and escapes it is the question of *Who Must Speak as Other*. This question brings to the surface the ambivalence of the production of contestatory discourses: their conquering of silence with voice, but also their containment within discursive formations which limit their power to 'speak'.

Each term in the question can be isolated and examined for its implications in relation to the whole, and these in turn can be shown to relate to points so far discussed. First, to ask 'Who Must' is to refer both to an imposed confinement of the speaking subject to a particular discursive territory, and to the sense in which one is obligated to produce one's discourse, obliged to confess. Secondly, to Speak, as has been shown, is understood as being to express the authentic truth of and from within the interiority of the self, and under this phonocentric dispensation is -- when one 'speaks' through a text -- to be read in purely expressive terms, a reading which is blind to the play of language in writing. This effects a type of literary marginalisation, in which the text of the Other is read only in terms of its value "because it speaks for some area of social experience, hitherto neglected" and not in the privileged terms of writing which

"finds new ways of expressing and giving form to that experience."<sup>35</sup> Nor is it considered that the text of the Other concerns anything but the experience of being Other. This relates to the third point that the term 'as Other' both describes the discursive territory proffered by the dominant literary discursive formation -- the institutions of publishing, criticism, and canonisation through pedagogy -- and names that territory not as 'identity' or specificity, but as a monolithic, homogeneous position *in relation to* these institutions. Thus the question as a whole articulates the phonocentric assumption that the marginal voice speaks and expresses the authentic truth of itself (and itself alone), and the power relations that inhere in the confessional situation: the truth of discourse conferred by the One who requires it, thereby defining the Other as confessing subject, and who hears and appreciates it through authority.

These questions and issues can be brought productively to bear in consideration of the textual form of autobiography. They are of particular relevance in relation to autobiographies by post-colonialism's Others, post-colonised indigenous subjects. The contemporary form of the autobiography has been differentiated from the confession: "while autobiography is often an attempt at constructing a self out of the bits and pieces of a life seen from the inside, a confession is an opposite attempt at *dismantling* the self that has been created from without, by others."<sup>36</sup> However, a text like Morgan's *My Place* cannot easily be categorised according to this difference; instead it is an example of the way they can be brought together, sometimes contradictorily or disruptively, within a text. Post-colonial Native women's autobiography -- to reify these writings into a genre -- is ambivalently placed within dominant literary discursive formations. This is especially true of an autobiography like *My Place*, whose subject is not simply Sally Morgan alone, nor even Arthur, Gladys and Daisy Corunna as well, but also 'Aboriginality' itself. Therefore, like the 'autobiography' as defined by Gunnars, the text constructs both individual identities and racial identity out of the 'bits and pieces' of subjects' lives and memories, while like the 'confession', it challenges and dismantles false or negative public images, and self-images in relation to Aboriginality shown to be formed by way of detour through, and contamination by, public or White Australian perception. Further, it has been asserted that

The dramatic structure of conversion that we find in Augustine's Confessions, where the self is presented as the stage for a battle of opposing forces and where a climactic victory for one force . . . completes the drama of the self, simply does not accord with the deepest realities of women's experience and so is inappropriate as a model for women's life-writing.<sup>37</sup>

However, *My Place* demonstrates a number of aspects of just such a conversion narrative. Indeed arguably any autobiography by an indigenous or immigrant writer in a settler post-colonial society will manifest features of the subject as the stage for a battle of opposing cultural, linguistic, racial/ethnic, or historical forces, written from the perspective of some resolution of these forces. For example, Gunnars refers to the problem for the woman writer, belonging to an ethnic group different from the majority, of shifting divisions of the self into 'us' and 'them'.<sup>38</sup> Further, if it is argued that in fact the subject of *My Place* is not properly Sally Morgan at all, that it is not an example of women's life-writing, but rather is 'Aboriginality', then as later discussion will show more fully, the very conventions which are held to characterise women's autobiographies in differentiation from men's, serve also, through their similarity to methods of representation of Aboriginality, to 'feminise' Aboriginality itself.

Along with the construction of (awareness of) Aboriginality, particularly for Sally and her sisters and brothers, an attainment inherited by her own children ("I've got some good news this morning. I'd like you all to know I got a bit of blackfella in me" [320]), and the construction of the life-stories of Arthur, Gladys and Daisy, there are a number of redemptive conversions undergone by the characters. Through the process represented in the novel, Sally and her siblings' *false* identities as Indian are replaced by *true* identities as Aboriginal; the 'false' absence of characters' visibility as Aboriginal is replaced by its 'true' presence; and feelings of shame and fear are gradually replaced by pride. Perhaps it could be conceded, in relation to Mason's argument, that instead of one climactic victory, *My Place* differs from the 'male' conversion narrative in that it contains many smaller though no less important, climactic victories. These are marked, for example, by Sally's observations that she would have to "learn to be content with the little [Daisy] was willing to give" (149); that "It was a small victory but an important one" (162) when Daisy informed them that she believed Howden Drake-Brockman to be her

father; that Arthur's story was "something to be proud of" (214); and that Daisy, in finishing her story, "felt she'd achieved something" (351).

However, preceding discussion has also demonstrated that if *My Place* is in part a confession, then it is necessary to address the question of whom the confession is produced for. Some features of the narrative suggest that, contrary to Foucault's critique of the repressive hypothesis as it refers to the production of discourse, it is indeed the confessing subject who benefits from it. It is suggested, for example, in Arthur's initial disappointment that "Different people, they say, 'Arthur, we'll write your story,' but none of them come back to see me" (166), and in his assumption that Daisy's reluctance to tell her story is because "'she's bin with whitefellas too long. They make her feel 'shamed'" (148), so that her speech would be an index of her liberation from this oppressive imposition. These points are underlined by Sally's admission that when she rang Judy, Howden Drake-Brockman's daughter, she "had expected to encounter opposition. Perhaps I wanted to encounter opposition, it fired my sense of injustice" (153). More generally, or rather more collectively, Gladys observes that "There's been nothing written about people like us, all the history's about the white man. There's nothing about Aboriginal people and what they've been through" (161). In this way, to speak out is to insert themselves into history's record, an outcome seen in itself as redemptive: "'If I stay silent like Nanna, it's like saying everything's all right. People should know what it's been like for someone like me'" (238). Both in the slippage from 'us' to 'people like us' and 'me' to 'someone like me', as well as in the sense that 'good' for the confessing subject and those who identify with her comes from self-declaration, from people 'knowing' (about) her, there is evidence of what has been referred to as the 'exemplary' nature of native women's autobiographies. This has been related to the form in which they originated:

The first Native autobiographies were 'told-to' narratives, the joint 'collaboration' of an ethnographer or missionary, and a Native. . . . In this they are the narrative of a 'representative of their culture, their story emphasizing the individual only in relation to her/his social roles, not as [a] distinctive individual.<sup>39</sup>

The exemplary status of Native autobiography is also acknowledged in recognition of such texts as produced by writers "from more communal traditions" in which "the self does not stand out against the background of

the group in quite the same way."<sup>40</sup> There are, further, grounds for pointing to *My Place* as overdetermined by race and gender as an autobiography by an Aboriginal woman, in the sense that women's autobiographies have been described as written through, or at least illustrating the importance of 'significant others'.<sup>41</sup> It could certainly be argued that there is nothing posited in *My Place* which characterises Sally or any member of her family as inherently 'special' as individuals; rather, the effect of their discourse lies in its 'representativeness', presenting Sally as a 'vehicle' through which the process of tracing and recording family history can serve as inspiration or model for other Aboriginal people.

Nevertheless, the argument that Sally, her family, and by association 'Aboriginal people' of which they are representative, are both the subjects and the beneficiaries of the confessional aspects of *My Place*, is compromised by inter-textual evidence that the text has been shaped and modified in line with the 'requirements' of the predominantly Anglo-Australian publishing industry and reading public. In the light of the assertion that "The editor was concerned that the Aboriginal English expression of some of the oral material could be regarded as demeaning to its users when represented in printed form," and that "There was some fear that literate Euro-Australian readers would be less sympathetic to such 'alien' forms of expression,"<sup>42</sup> it would seem that the power of definition of discursive acceptability lies with the literary and publishing institutions and their perception of reader prejudice. It is indeed ironic that despite the "publishing industry being in a state of readiness, even eagerness, to publish work by Aboriginal writers,"<sup>43</sup> or more correctly *because* of this readiness, the prejudice and oppression which generate the text as an act of liberating expression return to censor the form of that very expression while proclaiming it as authentic 'Aboriginal literature'. This is not to argue that 'authenticity' can only be attributed to those texts which closely mirror traditional narrative or discursive forms. Rather, it is a matter of where the power of definition lies.

However, there is a mediating function operating in the text even before it reaches editing and modification by publishers. This function is undertaken by Sally herself, as the transcriber of the family's stories. Is there justification, therefore, for regarding Sally as the receiver of the text's confessions? This question can be addressed by an analysis both of structures of subjectivity in relation to each other, and particularly of



Sally's various 'placements' by the text. Unlike Eldred-Grigg in *Oracles and Miracles*, another transcribed narrative, Sally is an integral member of both the family and the self-constituting group identity, Aboriginal. In many ways *My Place* presents itself as a 'collective autobiography', and there are assertions and illustrations in the text of the centrality of story-sharing to the characters involved and even to the process of its construction. When Sally has finished Arthur's story, she telephones her mother: "'It's finished'. . . . /'Can I come and read it?'/ 'That's what I'm ringing you for'" (172). When Daisy has finally shared her story, Sally narrates, "she still couldn't bring herself to tell my brothers and sisters. Consequently, I found myself communicating it to them in bits and pieces as it seemed appropriate" (307). Further, Daisy's sharing of her story is presented as an outcome of other stories being shared:

I read her the section on Arthur's boxing days. When I stopped, she said, 'That's a wonderful story, a really good one. I did enjoy it, where did you get such a story from?'/ 'This is what I've been writing, Nan,' I grinned. That's Arthur's story'. . . . I read a little more, and then we began to talk about the old days and life on Corunna Downs Station. For some reason, Nan was keen to talk. . . . Her words tumbled one over the other, as if her tongue couldn't say them quickly enough. (308)

It has been noted that the effects of the text have been projected by the characters as collective. However, the motivation for pursuing it as process has also been regarded as beyond the concern of the individual. Sally's decision to continue studies on an Aboriginal scholarship is explained following her vision of her grandmother: "If I denied my identification with the past now, I'd be denying her as well" (141). Similarly, when Sally has finished Arthur's story, she reflects, "I owed him a great debt. He'd told me so much about himself and his life, and in doing so, he'd told me something about my own heritage" (172). The autobiographical 'I' is therefore placed by the narrative within an overall understanding of the priority of the collective autobiographical 'we'. In this way, Sally's function suggests the writer as 'transmitter' rather than 'creator' or 'owner' of stories. One feature of this role of transmitter is, according to Godard, that "the storyteller feels herself to be essentially a keeper of a sacred trust."<sup>44</sup> In *My Place*, Sally is invoked to ensure the 'safety' of the stories she is given, both in the process of their production, and once the stories have been finished. She recounts that Arthur was "always worried about my cassette recorder. I had to check it each time and

make sure it was working. 'You don't want to miss nothin',' he'd remind me. 'Those batteries get low.' Even if the batteries were new, I still had to check" (164). This concern is later mirrored by Daisy in relation to her own story (320-1). When the stories are finished, Daisy asks Sally "'You'll keep what I told you safe, won't you?'" (353), and of Arthur's story similarly tells her "'You got to keep that story safe'" (308). Thus discourse is understood not as a commodity whose value is dependant upon its dissemination, but as a personal possession or even part of the self, and whose transmission requires certain qualifications of the one to whom it is transferred. In this way the text could be seen as an account, among other things, of the process of Sally's initiation by Daisy in preparation for the role, a process which is completed on Daisy's death which itself signifies the point at which the text could be produced.

Other features of the narrative, and the form of the text itself, suggest a reading of it as an autobiography with embedded biographies, casting Sally not simply as confessing subject and part of a collective confession, but as confessor to the stories of Arthur, Gladys and Daisy. These stories are structurally anticipated and formed by as well as situated within Sally's narrative, and while 'her' sections of the narrative have thematic titles, the stories of Arthur, Gladys and Daisy appear in the table of contents with third-person references to their subjects, so that they are to some extent enclosed within and separated from the overall text. Sally's narrative incorporates numerous indications of her role and participation as researcher, interviewer, transcriber and editor, influencing the stories she records. There are indirect suggestions of her presence as interlocutor, as the characters tell their stories. These include second-person addresses such as Arthur's "I can't tell you how old I am exactly" (175). There are similarly indirect references to her direction of the stories appearing as clear answers to questions the reader is left to reconstruct: "I wish I could give advice for the young blackfellas of today" (212), although Daisy (or Sally as editor) is more explicit when she says "Now you asked me 'bout the future" (349). Further, Sally's narrative contains many instances of active, even aggressive soliciting of these stories where there is reluctance to offer them to her. Arthur's willingness has already been noted, however Gladys and Daisy are frequently challenged by her. Gladys is told "'You only THINK you don't know anything. I'm sure if you searched those hidden recesses of your mind you'd come up with something'" (151), and she is placed under moral pressure to do so: "'You've got to help me,

you're my mother, it's your duty" (151). However, Sally finally leaves no doubt as to which of them is ultimately in a position to benefit from, and confer value upon the discourse of her mother: "What seems unimportant to you could be a really good lead for me" (151). Daisy is placed under similar moral pressure when Sally tells her, "You can't put lies in a book. You know that, don't you Nan?" (161). Occasionally her exhortations to confess are made in the context of actual accusations. She tells Gladys, "You've lied about things before" (156), and although she admits, using the terminology of Christian accountability, that Gladys is guilty only of "a sin of omission rather than anything else" (171), she chooses a moment of vulnerability for Gladys ("before she had time to gather her wits") to accuse "You deliberately misled us. . . . Why on earth didn't you tell us the truth?" (171). She indirectly 'threatens' Gladys (172), and uses the aggressive term "tackled" to describe her questioning -- catechising? -- of Daisy (236). Sally therefore reveals herself as a harsh and relentless 'confessor', wresting the truth of their 'souls' from her family.

The reader is also frequently told of her research procedures, generally as she explains them to others: "I'm putting down what I know. It's not much, but it's a start. Then I'm going to try and fill in what I don't know, and I expect you to help me" (150; also 153). These procedures include those by which the stories are turned into text. She describes, underlining her 'amateurism', the point at which she "bought a typewriter and started to type. As [Gladys] watched my jerky two-finger effort she said, 'It'll take you a lifetime to do a page at that rate'" (150). This amateurism, as has been shown, serves to authenticate her text by differentiating it from the product of a 'writer',<sup>45</sup> as do the suggestions of writing as an act militated against by various difficulties which are overcome only by determination. For example, the chapter which recounts her decision to begin the book is entitled, "Where There's a Will" (150). However, as her work proceeds, she describes her transcription and, importantly, arrangement of the material into a form closer to that in which we read it than in which it was produced. She tells Arthur, "I'll finish typing all the cassettes. Then I'll put it all together, because we've got bits and pieces all over the place" (165). Therefore, the reader does not have unmediated access to the 'authentic' discourse of Arthur, Gladys, and Daisy, as Sally's role, like that of confessor, has been one of soliciting and directing discourse as well as appreciating it within the context and function of her authority. However, her own status as confessor, for whom the discourses are produced, is

ambivalent: she also produces her own confession, that of the process by which the text -- at this pre-published point basically her own discourse -- was produced. Further, Sally acknowledges her own fallibility in admissions of insensitivity and errors of judgement, such as "It was a stupid thing to say" (156), "It was another tactical error" (171), "I felt ashamed of myself for doubting her" (156), and "she was hurt, and I felt terrible, because I'd caused it" (161).

For whom, therefore, is Sally's confession produced? If it is the reader who decides not only whether the text is acceptable, as reflected in the editor's concern, and whether it has the 'ring of truth', an ideologically determined evaluation, then it would seem that the reader confers meaning and truth on the text. Of course, to posit a homogeneous 'reading public' would be fallacious, as would any tidy categories of reader which could be added together to produce as a 'whole number' the total of the reading public. However, the point could still be made that, for example, post-colonised subjects are likely to receive the text in a different way from post-colonisers. For the former, its redemptive function relates in part to the recognition of their own 'entry into literature'.<sup>46</sup> However, it has also been shown that post-colonising readers represent a stronger source of influence over the fate of the text as it is shaped to conform to expected and accepted, conventional modes of expression.<sup>47</sup> The very form in which it is granted authenticity is that which inscribes and guarantees its inauthenticity, if 'authenticity' is equated with origins. However, the post-colonising reader is also placed by the text in a compromising position as 'confessor'. In this role, the reader is reinvested with the power which she/he is accused of having inherited by way of colonial history and the perpetuation of colonial power relations. On the other hand, participating in the 'redemptive' reading poses the danger of eliding the history and continued existence of racial oppression which generated the text.

This discussion has not been intended to decide once and for all where 'power' truly lies in relation to the discourses of *My Place*; nor to locate it within one 'agent' or even a collective agent. Discursive power is distributed throughout the range of participants in the production of discourse, albeit unevenly. It inheres not in agents or even institutions as such, but *through* them by way of strategies employed. It therefore is a powerful gesture to produce an Aboriginal autobiography, to the extent at least that the entry into public discourse means that "through struggle,

acquiring some of the strategies and structures of the dominant [subject], the subaltern rises 'into hegemony,' this process constituting a *dis/placement* of the dominant discourse and strategies of hybridization that undermines its monolithic position of power."<sup>48</sup> Similarly, the narrative recounts how the process by which the text was produced involved powerful effects in the transference and circulation of discourses among the participant-characters themselves.

However, the process among the characters of the text's production, although recounted, is effective properly speaking outside of the confines of the text itself. It is not a source of the power of *My Place* once it, as object, has left the 'authors' to enter the sphere of the reader. Gladys acknowledges this when she admits "I find I am embarrassed sometimes by what I have told, but I know I cannot retract what has been written, it's no longer mine" (306).

#### 5. IV. Resisting Silences: The Ambivalence of Identification.

In the context of the loss of textual and discursive control on the part of the writing subject once a text is published -- made public -- the question is raised as to how such a text can constitute resistance, or further, how the resisting subject can be constituted in and by the text. If the effects of discourse are ambivalent, it is worth turning attention to the text's silences, and posing the different question of the role of silence in resistance. This could be regarded as a perverse question, given the general association of silence with the effects of oppression, as illustrated in Gunew's reference to those who "have signalled their oppression largely through their silence, at least for those who were prepared to hear it."<sup>49</sup> Silence certainly has functioned as an index of oppression, once the absence of discourse it signifies has been discerned. However, Foucault provides an insight into silence which allows it to be heard differently:

Silence itself . . . is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies. There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things. . . . There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses.<sup>50</sup>

Silence can therefore be reconsidered as a strategy of resistance, a positive withholding of discourse in subversion or refusal of the exhortation to confess, to produce the truth of the self for the post-coloniser. This is definitely not to argue the post-colonised into silence; it is, rather, to propose an analysis of the many silences which inhabit discourse and to acknowledge the possibility of their functioning not as negative lack or absence, but as positive presence within complex and multiple strategies of resistance.

At least three forms of 'silence' can be discerned in *My Place*: the gaps in discourse, literariness, and the instability of subjectivity. The most obvious silences are the places in the text where discourse is solicited and withheld, or indicated and not produced. Despite Sally's protestations, discourse is withheld from her in the form of secrets kept by other characters. Those secrets are variously kept as a matter of propriety, as when Arthur declines to divulge Daisy's Aboriginal name: "'No, I can't tell you,' he said, 'it's not as if I wouldn't like to, but Daisy should tell you herself'" (148), and when he admits "'Some things 'bout her I can't tell. It wouldn't be right'" (158). However, discourse is also withheld from the reader on these grounds. Arthur tells Sally, "'Now, some things I might tell you, I don't want in the book, is that all right?'" (164). Sally's agreement underlines for the reader both dependence on Sally's integrity and judgement, but also areas in which the transfer of information may exclude him/her. To the extent that Sally honours this agreement, there is an exercise of power by the protagonists over the reader in the 'editing out' of some of the 'truth', thereby destabilising the text's overall claim to this plenitude despite its invocation in the presentation of multiple perspectives. Sally's role as mediator sometimes directly interferes with the amount of information provided to the reader. When Daisy tells her "There was rows all the time with Bill. You know all 'bout that, so I'll say no more" (347), we are provided with the 'gratuitous' information of Sally's presence as interlocutor, but as a result of her position as family member with 'insider knowledge' (a position which differentiates her from the 'ethnographer' recording the discourse of the 'native informant' including that which Jeanette Armstrong defined as "unnecessary"), it is suggested to the reader that aspects of Daisy's narrative are elided. Although it could be argued that sufficient information is provided on this matter by other characters, notably Sally herself but also Gladys, or even that further information is indeed unnecessary once the fact of "rows . . .

with Bill" has been noted, it is more important to recognise the devices by which Daisy's narrative is suggested as being constructed for Sally, and not for the reader. Indeed, the bringing to the surface of some information is suggested by Gladys to be potentially destructive, as she urges Sally, "Can't you just leave the past buried, it won't hurt anyone then?" (152), while the dissemination of information is regarded by Daisy as dangerous: "you dunno what you're doin' writin' this book. Bad things might happen to you. If I tell you some things, next thing, you'll be tellin' everyone" (319).

Secrets pervade the text, making the absence of discourse one of the strongest and most compelling presences of the text. These are occasionally to do with areas of 'traditional Aboriginal knowledge'. In a passage which associates the 'sacred' with the 'secret', and indicating the possibility of more information having passed between Daisy and Sally than the reader is given, Daisy confides, "Now, I'll tell you something, Sal, this is a sacred thing, so I better speak quiet. I helped your mother with that polio. You see, our family's always had powers that way. I don't want to say no more" (346). However, more usually, the secrets appear to relate to sources of personal shame or anger, and they almost exclusively surround Daisy, even as they affect or relate to other characters. Early in the process of story-sharing, she says "Glad, you're always goin' on about the past. You and Arthur are a good pair, you don't know what a secret is" (148). Even when she agrees to tell her story, she warns Sally "I got my secrets, I'll take them to the grave. Some things I can't talk 'bout. Not even to you, my granddaughter. They for me to know. They not for you or your mother to know" (349). Sally is therefore forced to accept that "she's still going to keep her secrets, but anything's better than nothing" (320). However, despite Daisy's reproof, Gladys and Arthur do appear to know what a secret is: Arthur's reticence in relation to information about Daisy has been noted; similarly, Gladys is accused of "hoarding [her] own little secrets" (172), and Sally observes in the early stages of her research that "Nan and Mum had united. Now that Mum was feeling threatened, she suddenly found she had more in common with Nan than she'd ever imagined" (172). As will be shown, the status of this observation is a complex one within the text; there is a possible dramatic irony in which the observation of Gladys and Daisy having more in common includes more in common than even Sally as narrator 'knows'.

Discourse withheld from the reader constitutes an act of resistance in a context in which 'visibility' has been learned to facilitate control. Daisy's physical absences as attempts at invisibility have already been discussed.<sup>51</sup> However visibility can also be 'audibility' where one's Otherness can be 'heard', and in this respect Daisy's initial reticence, even defensiveness with regard to her native language (149) may constitute resistance by avoidance. It is a strategy of resistance, nonetheless. Further, her and others' silence on some Aboriginal matters may function to preserve the sacredness or appropriate guardianship of such matters from the profanity of dissemination and the loss of control that would result. Indeed, perhaps it is strategy that the text invokes so strongly and almost completely the discourse of pan-Aboriginality, rarely providing any consciousness of detail specific to the people of particular areas and languages. Even if such detail is present in the text, it is re-presented as 'Aboriginal'. Although this could signify the adoption of a discourse more powerful within post-colonial Australia, it could also be read as a strategic silence which refuses to empower the reader with 'true' knowledge of the Other, thereby protecting and preserving difference.<sup>52</sup>

However, there are disturbing ambivalences and inconsistencies in the presentation of privileged knowledge and 'personal secrets'. For example, Sally's position as recipient of 'sacred', family or personal knowledge not only results in places where the reader discerns a gap in the discourse, but also conflicts with her role as narrator *for the reader*. It must be asked how something considered so 'sacred' by Daisy that she must speak quietly finds its way into the text even to the limited extent that it does -- one cannot speak quietly in writing; or why a statement preceded by the formula for confidentiality, "Just between you and me" (347) is shared with the reader as well, albeit placing the reader in the position of eavesdropper. Indeed, the text's positioning of the reader in relation to its secrets requires further analysis in terms of the functioning of secrets as the silence of resistance.

The text appears to contain one pervasive secret, a secret which everywhere makes itself clearly heard. As has been pointed out, this secret centres on Daisy, and initially is present as her mysterious reticence. However, other aspects of the narrative intensify the presence of this absence until statements fairly throb with significance. As Muecke has pointed out in his reading of the text in relation to the "repressive



hypothesis," the difficulty of getting Daisy to produce her story serves on one level to reinforce that its eventual production represents as "index of liberation, as well as a delaying device in the narrative."<sup>53</sup> Although Muecke goes on to posit "a possible Aboriginal discursive strategy of *non-disclosure* in the face of the demand to speak,"<sup>54</sup> a point which is clearly the basis of my argument, the relevance of the former suggestions should not simply be passed over. While narrative structuring as 'silence' will be analysed shortly, it is useful at this point to hold the two 'readings' of Daisy's reticence together, illustrating the way in which the validity of the former shows up disturbances in the latter. Obviously the secret could not function in the text if its presence were completely successfully submerged. However, the extent and manner of its presences compromise not only its status as a secret, but also the positions of the characters, Sally as narrator/recorder, and the reader, in relation to the text.

Quite simply, the secret is related to the similarly insistent question of paternity. On the one hand, it is a question of Daisy's paternity, and Sally's efforts are focused on obtaining answers to this matter. At the very beginning of her project, Sally recounts that she rang Judy (Aunty Judy): "I explained that I was writing a book about Nan and Arthur and I thought she might be able to help me. We agreed that I would come down for lunch and she said she could tell me who Nan's father was" (153). However, despite the lack of expected opposition, when she returns from her visit to Judy with the information that Maltese Sam is Daisy's father and tells Arthur, he responds, "'She said WHAT?'" (157). Having dismissed this idea, he explains the conspiracy of silence which resulted in this false information:

'Now you listen to me, Daisy's father is the same as mine. Daisy is my only full sister. Albert, he's our half brother, his father was Howden, too, but by a different woman.'

'So you reckon he fathered the both of you.'

'By jove, he did! Are you gunna take the word of white people against your own flesh and blood? I got no papers to prove what I'm sayin'. . . .

....

'[T]hey had the Victorian way of thinking in those days. Before there were white women, our father owned us, we went by his name, but later, after he married his first wife, Nell, he changed our names.'" (157)

In addition, when Sally eventually tells Daisy that Judy had said her father was Maltese Sam, Sally recounts that "I suddenly realised she was hurt" (161). One of Daisy's first revelations is therefore in response to what she perceives as denial of her by the Drake-Brockmans. In an evocation of the difficulty of producing discourse which transgresses the accepted or acceptable 'truth', Sally relates that "Nan was quiet for a few seconds, and then, pressing her lips together, she said very slowly, 'I ... think ... my father was ... Howden Drake-Brockman'" (162). Therefore, this secret is one in which the 'truth' has been repressed in the interests of preserving the façade of colonial morality at the expense of the Aboriginal people. It is a silence whose status is that of an index of oppression, and its breaking one of liberation.

However, there is a second question of paternity which only initially is seen by the reader to function in the same way, although Sally's 'reading' of it remains consistent with the repressive hypothesis. Further, it is this second question which has sealed Daisy's silence. It concerns the identity of Gladys's father. Along with information regarding Maltese Sam, Sally has returned from her visit to Judy with the information that Gladys's father was Jack Grimes. However, Gladys is "stunned" by this news, and her vague recollection of his visits provides neither confirmation, nor at that point, particular grounds for doubt. However, in the later context of Judy's apparent unreliability, the reader may be caused to regard Gladys's surprise and vagueness as intuitive evidence that it could not be true. Further, the narrative includes a number of unsettling observations and statements. Despite Arthur's assurances of the 'truth' of "flesh and blood," Sally records that he "had us both nearly completely convinced, except for one thing, he avoided our eyes. Mum and I knew it wasn't a good sign, there was something he wasn't telling us" (157). This is attributed by Sally to the veracity of his claims about Daisy's father. However, given that the identity of Gladys's father is also of intimate concern to Daisy, a following statement by Arthur suggests that this is indeed the matter over which Daisy, supported by him, 'has her secrets': "'She could tell you everything you want to know. You see, Howden was a lonely man. I know, one night at Ivanhoe, we both got drunk together and he told me all his troubles. He used to go down to Daisy's room at night and talk to her. I can't say no more'" (158).

At this point, the reader is made most clearly conscious of the ambivalent functioning of discourse as silence in the text. Sally's account of Arthur's protection of Daisy, rather than protecting her from exposure to the public gaze and respecting her wish for privacy, serves to place her more firmly under that gaze. To allude to a secret with the words "'I can't say no more'" is only to focus attention on the point at which this withdrawal from discourse was considered necessary. It is, for the reader, the secret "whose discovery is imperative, a thing abusively reduced to silence, and at the same time difficult and necessary, dangerous and precious to divulge."<sup>55</sup> In literary terms, this presence of absence of information activates a reading in terms of the genre of *mystery*, and 'clues' are sought in both what is said and what is left unsaid. In this way, the whole of the 'truth' may be reconstructed. In other words, the text is placed by the reader not within a discursive practice of resistance, but within a western literary genre whose function is to solicit the deciphering and fixing of meaning once and for all, a process of utter containment. That Sally as narrator is complicit in this through the structuring of the narrative in terms of the characters' (but especially her own) pursuit of "'the full story'" (158) of Daisy's 'truth' is emphasised by the irony of the places in the text where the reader appears to know more than the narrator.

For example, following Arthur's reference to Howden's loneliness and his night visits to Daisy's room (suggestive in itself as the point at which he will say no more), Sally reflects that "'There's another possibility. Howden may have been her father, but there could be something else, some secret that she wants to keep, that is somehow tied in with all of this. Perhaps that's why he didn't look us in the eye'" (158). Later, in what functions as something like a second mirror encounter, which as Chapter One showed, confers identity by way of the Other, Sally narrates that

Mum fronted up to the mirror and tried not to laugh. She felt silly.

Suddenly I held up a photo of Howden as a young man next to her face. We both fell into silence.

'My God,' I whispered. 'Give him black curly hair and a big bust and he's the spitting image of you!'

Mum was shocked. 'I can't believe it,' she said. 'Why haven't I ever noticed this before, I've seen that picture hundreds of times.'

'I suppose it never occurred to you,' I replied.

'You don't think it's possible he was my father?'

'Anything's possible. But he couldn't be yours as well as Nan's. You know features can skip a generation.' (237)

At this point, the reader, reading for 'clues', marvels at the 'obtuseness' of Sally and Gladys: or is it the deliberate obtuseness of the narrative? Is there a deliberate strategy of refusing to admit the inadmissible? This appears to be the case in the light of Daisy's eventual concession regarding Gladys's father that "how all this came about, that's my business. I'll only tell a little. Everyone knew who the father was, but they all pretended they didn't know. Aah, they knew, they knew. You didn't talk 'bout things then. You hid the truth" (340). Not only is the secret clearly something inadmissible, but there are *two* silences surrounding it, and the reader is placed in an impossible position. In relation to the silence of the Drake-Brockmans who "knew", the reader is provided with a narrative full of 'clues' and structured by 'suspense', to be drawn into the search for the truth which will expose the exploitative practices to which Daisy and her family were subjected. However, in doing so, the reader must invade Daisy's much wished-for privacy which is so strong that not even Gladys or Sally can be told explicitly what remains unspoken. Thus Daisy is once again objectified by the gaze of the Other. Further, the reader's state of knowledge at the end of the text threatens to undermine the closeness and unity attained by the characters as a result of the process of tracing the Corunna family history. Is the reader therefore exhorted to 'under-read', to relinquish the power of the confessor by choosing not to see what the text seems to offer? In the case of two silences inhabiting the same absence of discourse, can one be complicit with one silence, and not with the other?

A second form of silence in the text is 'literariness'. The features of the text which emphasise it as *writing* subvert the illusion of the speaking voice. As has already been argued, the narrative is structured to achieve an effect of suspense, and Muecke points out that the culmination of the narrative in Daisy's agreement to share her story, "represents a shift to more traditional Aboriginality."<sup>56</sup> There is therefore a defining movement in the narrative which has been chosen to reflect the thematic concern of the text. Another critic has referred to the use of symbolism as a unifying device in the text. Newman has discussed the use of bells, the theme of children taken from parents, and bird calls.<sup>57</sup> The latter is most obvious as a framing device for the text. Near the beginning of the text

Sally narrates that "Suddenly the yard filled with a high trilling sound. My eyes searched the trees. I couldn't see that bird, but his call was there. The music stopped as abruptly as it had begun./Nan smiled at me, 'Did you hear him? Did you hear that bird call?'" (14). At this point Sally recognises it as a "magical moment," but it is not until its return at the end of the text that its full (Aboriginal) significance is realised. Daisy has become very ill, and Sally says, "The following morning, my phone rang very early./ . . . 'I heard the bird call.' It was Jill's voice./'What Bird call?'/ 'This morning, about five o'clock. I heard it Sally. It was something spiritual, something out of this world. I think she'll be going soon'" (356). Daisy herself is unperturbed by the bird call, and tells Sally, "'it was the Aboriginal bird. . . . God sent him to tell me I'm going home soon'" (357). Finally, on news of Daisy's death, the bird call unites them all: "For some reason, Jill's words from the previous day began echoing inside of me. I heard the bird call. I heard the bird call. Around and around./ 'Oh, Nan', I cried with sudden certainty, 'I heard it, too. In my heart, I heard it'" (357-8).

Apart from framing the narrative and defining its movement from innocence of Aboriginality to spiritual knowledge, Newman has noted that the bird call's "organization as a structuring symbol is indicative of a literate use, but its origins as a sign of impending death are oral and folkloric."<sup>58</sup> However, it could be argued that the text consistently swallows origins in writing. For example, it has already been shown that Sally's role as transcriber and editor of the stories radically separates words from their (oral) origins. The stories pass not only through Sally's processes, but in their narration and textualisation, through networks of intertextuality. The mystery story has already been discussed. In addition, Muecke argues, in a discussion of *My Place* and *A Fortunate Life*, that "different discourses cluster around the texts as support groups. . . . For *My Place* there is the feminist support group of discourses which in many of their current forms place a high value on subjectivity as opposed to 'movement' politics. There is also Christianity and a touch of New Age mysticism."<sup>59</sup> Although he does not claim so specifically, there are also echoes of *A Fortunate Life* itself, largely in Arthur's story, as discussed in Chapter Three. Finally in relation to the narrative structure of the text, the fact that Sally's narrative frames the stories of the other characters reflects not the natural 'emergence' of her story, but an ordering which conforms to elements of the conventions of autobiographical writing, notably the

illusion of chronological events. Although Sally's own narrative, correctly speaking, *follows* the processes which constitute the text, early events in her life are re-invested with the significance these processes have conferred, and placed at the beginning so that the text begins with her childhood, and develops chronologically to the point where she undertakes the book itself, then represents that process. That what we read is the adult rather than authentic child's voice at the beginning is suggested in the unlikely observation of a five-year-old that, to her amusement, the doctor, asked about her claim of chalk allergy, "prevaricated" (76).

Because, as has been noted, the autobiography is not an authentic native form, it could further be argued that the extent to which *My Place* conforms to features of the autobiographical genre represents the extent to which 'authentic' Aboriginal' discourse is silenced. With regard to the general form of the autobiography, for example, *My Place* employs the characteristic first-person narrative, the narrator-protagonist, 'local colour', and 'facts' drawn from history. These are the characteristics of autobiography identified as also used in 'autobiographical' fiction, and although fiction and autobiography are generally differentiated, autobiography also uses *devices* of fiction. These range from those consistent with the general observation that "Any human verbalizing is a process that by its very nature fictionalizes experience,"<sup>60</sup> to the more specific assertion that "linear cause and effect replace the complexities of real life."<sup>61</sup>

Features described as characteristic of men's autobiographies rather than women's are, as has been shown, also found in *My Place*. Its similarity to the 'conversion narrative' was remarked earlier in the discussion. In addition, despite Jelinek's attributing of the qualities of chronology and progression to 'male' narratives,<sup>62</sup> these are features of both the overall text and the embedded stories of *My Place*. On the other hand, her description of women's autobiographies as "disconnected, fragmentary, or organized into self-sustained units rather than connecting chapters,"<sup>63</sup> also has applicability to Morgan's text, just as it did to *Lives*. The stories of Arthur, Gladys, and Daisy are largely set off from, and self-sustaining within, the frame narrative, even if their place within that narrative is ordered by the chronology of their production.

Mary Mason has argued that

One element . . . that seems more or less constant in women's life-writing -- and this is not the case in men's life-writing -- is the sort of evolution and delineation of an identity by way of alterity. . . . Relation to another autonomous being. . . , relation to one single transcendent other. . . , relation to two others. . . , relation to a multiple collectivity, a many-in-one. . . .<sup>64</sup>

Without entering into debate over the validity of these gender-based categorical differentiations, there are a number of points of relevance to *My Place*. For example, it is presumably typical of 'women's' autobiography that Gladys's story contains within it her recounting of her husband Bill's story. However, one principal 'alterity' in relation to which characters' identities are delineated is colonial and post-colonial White Australia. It is against the silences imposed that the characters 'speak out'; against the imposition of 'false' identities that 'true' identities are sought; against the ordered absence of Aboriginality that its presence is reconstructed. Indeed it is here that Aboriginality-as-subject is precisely the 'female' subject of autobiography/history. It is defined by way of the Other -- the language, the literary conventions, the Symbolic order -- as the Other -- the unconscious, the alterity -- of colonial/post-colonial Australia. Miller also discusses the 'relatedness' of women's autobiographies. She argues that "The mother is the significant other in many female autobiographies. She is both an agent of the patriarchy, socializing her daughter to her role. . . , and at the same time a potentially subversive model."<sup>65</sup> The female line of descent from Daisy to Sally is fundamental to the text, with Gladys placed ambivalently between them. Sally symbolises the 'future' of Aboriginality, while Daisy, the wise grandmother, is its source in tradition and in the past. In fact, as Daisy is dying, Sally notes, "She was a symbol. Part of us was going, too" (355). Gladys is caught between them, 'protectively' socialising Sally and her other children into educational and vocational success in the White Australian world, and of necessity out of Aboriginality (into a fabricated identity as Indian). On the other hand, despite Daisy's stronger links with the traditional Aboriginal past, it is Gladys who is the more willing to help Sally subvert the processes of racial and family dislocation in her readiness to speak out against them through Sally's book.

However, it is necessary to specify how these similarities to the conventions of autobiography *silence* Aboriginal discourse within the

hegemony of the literary text. Any convention represents the absence of presence, the absence of the unique specificity of expression. That the convention does not belong traditionally to one's culture is a silence in respect of that tradition. Of course, this is not to argue that they constitute *only* silence. For example, it could be argued that *My Place's* bridging of so many sometimes contradictory forms represents the presence of transgression as the text challenges the limits of an institutionalised literary genre. On the other hand, to the extent that it posits a model for 'Aboriginal autobiography', participating in the formulation of another set of literary expectations and norms, then the resisting voice of Aboriginal discourse is silenced precisely as it is heard. However, silence is not necessarily to be regretted: it protects what is not turned into literary discourse from the processes and institutions of literature; it restricts the circulation of traditional forms to within the social configurations chosen by those with 'insider' status, and prevents their knowledges from being either used 'against' them, or even appropriated. Indeed, autobiography has been described as "self-appropriation":

autobiography writing is self-appropriating activity which in Lacanian terms may be described as a kind of reconstitution of the subject. The autobiographer as a witness to his own actuality takes responsibility for his own past (his life history) in order to make the past his own -- to own it.<sup>66</sup>

However, to appropriate oneself is to cast oneself simultaneously as self and Other, the Other appropriating the self, so that the term is ultimately shown to be oxymoronic. This is suggested as Manganyi continues that "Self-appropriation enhances self-mastery and personal growth because as Olney has suggested, autobiography as a metaphor of self, as a creation of a meaning-pattern establishes order subjectively and in the external universe of experience."<sup>67</sup> Therefore, the self is appropriated by the Other - language -- and in particular the literary conventions of autobiography. The self remains forever alienated in the field of the Other, mastered by discourse.

Therefore, the third form of silence operating in *My Place* is that of the instability of subjectivity, and the concomitant instability of the text. The relationship between these can be discerned when it is remembered that the autobiography is traditionally founded on the Romantic belief in the unified subject of expression,<sup>68</sup> and that the instability of *My Place* as text --



between autobiography and biography; autobiography and 'confession'; between its conventionality and its difference; and its employment of multiple conventions -- subverts the possibility of its status as a unified act of expression. That there is no stable solution to the question, 'What is it saying?' is suggested in the culmination of sections of the preceding discussion in questions rather than answers, and in the positing of multiple and contradictory readings of the same discursive act, or strategy. *My Place* therefore problematises the imposition of fixable meaning and the search for the text's expression.

The instability of subjectivity characterises the multiple subjects of *My Place*. It is not simply Sally's autobiography; it includes the stories of Arthur, Gladys and Daisy, as well as of 'Aboriginality' in colonial and post-colonial Australia. While it could be argued that the stories are unified through Sally's re-presentation of the material and organisation of the text, Sally herself is a divided and contradictory subject of the text. She functions as transcriber, author, and character; in terms of the text as 'confession', she is both 'confessor' and 'confesser'; and as a character she changes from one who believes herself to be Indian, to one who knows herself to be Aboriginal. She, like the other characters, including 'Aboriginality' itself, is the fragmented subject of race and class interpellations. Newman, for example, comments that "The language use signifies social class distinctions rather than racial ones," although she regrets this as evidence of linguistic capitulation, as if social determinants of language were less authentic or applicable, as if Sally and her family were interpellated only by racial subject-positions.<sup>69</sup> Yet Sally and her family are variously interpellated by the institutions and discourses of white Australian society, and Aboriginal community and identity. There is a similarity in this to the autobiography written out of the immigrant experience as described by Gunnars, where "It is not surprising that [the subject] should posit a division in her sense of herself, since she was shaped by two cultures simultaneously."<sup>70</sup> Further, there is the paradoxical status of a unified discourse of pan-Aboriginality: it is both a sign of strength for resistance to white oppression, and a symptom of the post-colonising reduction of 'Aboriginality' to a symbol which can stand for what it has replaced. These are the empirical and historical fragmentations of the subjects of *My Place*, which even within the redemptive and regenerative thematics and energies of the text, allow it to remain unsettling. The ensuing silence is not the absence of discourse but,

in the sheer proliferation of discourses, the refusal of a discernable self-expression.

However, the subject of autobiography, whether individual, plural, or collective, partakes of the unstable colligations of all subjectivities. This is most clearly evident in the articulation in the present of the remembering subject of the past. The basis of much of the text in transcribed *oral* narrative is, as Kateryna Arthur has pointed out, one reason to look for "recognition of the role of the *present* in constructions of the past."<sup>71</sup> *My Place* provides markers of the present *situation* of the narrative despite the substantive concern of much of it with the past. Arthur reflects that "it seems funny, lookin' back now. Mucka was a good place to live in the old days" (211). Gladys admits, "I feel embarrassed now, to think that, once, I wanted to be white" (306). It would have been a very different story of Gladys's had it been told from that past perspective -- that is, had she wanted in the text's present to be white.

It has therefore been argued that a literary method for the study of autobiography should be to "single out for special study everything that the autobiographer says in *the present tense* about his affects."<sup>72</sup> The present tense "moors a reader's primary emotional response to an imaginary 'starting' point, the author's newest self (his writing self)."<sup>73</sup> What *My Place* thus reveals, despite characters' self-portraits as children, as workers, as domestic servants, and whether at Corunna Downs, Muckinbudin, or Parkerville Children's Home, is "an up-to-date personality profile not essentially unlike that which an analysand constructs for himself with the help of a psychoanalyst."<sup>74</sup> The fact that the autobiographical text provides "a picture from a specific viewpoint of a coherent shaping of an individual's past,"<sup>75</sup> and that the self as character is presented as "a developing entity, changing by definable stages,"<sup>76</sup> emphasises the importance of the present and the teleological drive which shapes the text as an account of subjects constituted by cause and effect. It also differentiates the subject of the autobiography (the textual 'I', the character, the subject of the *enounced*), from the autobiographical subject (the writing 'I', the subject of the *enunciation*).

The subject of the enunciation is the remembering subject, and it has been shown that the functioning of memory causes the subject to differ from, and defer, itself, offering only its Imaginary representation:

The illusion begins from the moment that the narrative confers a meaning on the event which, when it actually occurred, no doubt had several meanings or perhaps none. This postulating of a meaning dictates the choice of the facts to be retained and of the details to bring out or to dismiss according to the demands of the preconceived intelligibility.<sup>77</sup>

The meaning of *My Place* is, from the first page, the recuperation of (pride in) Aboriginality. From that perspective, there is a 'selecting out' of events for the characters whose ultimate meaning is not of relevance to this overarching telos. For example, there is little to suggest Sally's white father's influence on her developing character, talents, and so on. Where these are identified, such as her drawing ability, or her awareness of spiritual matters, they are related of necessity to her Aboriginal traditional and genetic inheritance. Similarly, because there is the element of quest in the text, this takes precedence in Sally's account of her own adult life over her roles as wife and mother, which could be argued to constitute an 'anti-quest'. Almost nothing is said of her developing relationship with, and marriage to Paul, or his subsequent place within the family and its journey of self-discovery. While she discusses her children's antics with family members, these are largely omitted from the text.<sup>78</sup>

However, not all selection and transformation of events is the result of the autobiographical artifice: the subject is subject *to* the illusions of memory and not simply the perpetrator *of* them. The psychoanalytic account of the functioning of memory describes its transformations of the past, through the workings of the unconscious, into forms inaccessible in their 'original truth':

Firstly, all recollections (the register we call memory) invariably create a limit or screen 'beyond which unfolds the scene of another memory'. Secondly, and to complicate matters still further, mnemonic representation is selectively related to the actuality of events. This means that what remains of the *actuality of an event* tends to be fragmentary due to its transformation into *psychic reality*.<sup>79</sup>

If the 'original event' is locked in the unconscious, it returns symptomatically in a form determined by the interaction of material that has become sedimented as psychic reality, and the context and act of remembering in the present. The relationships between memory, the unconscious and its return in the production of the autobiographical narrative can be examined by focusing on the formative moment of the

unconscious, the 'mirror stage'. As has been shown, the unconscious is produced at the point at which the perception of the image of the self in the mirror generates the repression of the excess of Imaginary plenitude, and although language enables the partial traversal of the distance between perceiving and perceived 'selves', so that the 'I' may be articulated as the partial return of the Imaginary, it must remain an 'I' alienated in language. The writing of autobiography has been likened to another 'mirror stage' in the sense that what is produced is a mirror image of the self: "The image is another 'myself', a double of my being but more fragile and vulnerable, invested with a sacred character that makes it at once fascinating and frightening. . . . According to most folklore and myth, the apparition of the double is a death sign."<sup>80</sup> The image is the signified self in language of autobiography; its sacred character is that ideal, unattainable truth of the self in the image; and the death sign is the sign as death, the empty signification of language in its *différance*. Thus the autobiography guarantees the silence of the subject in its implication in the chain of signification, image, writing, and death. Rosenblatt has argued that "Every autobiography . . . is an extended suicide note; both announcement and vindication of the event. The life recorded is the life complete to a specific point, and is therefore as good as dead."<sup>81</sup>

The self that results from the autobiographical narrative is a mythicised product, partaking of the Imaginary processes of Symbolic myth-making, the "myth of personal coherence"<sup>82</sup> in which the subject is complicit from the moment in which the split of the self into 'self' and 'other' is provisionally sutured. It is the fate of autobiography that the 'truth' of the subject is locked within the Real, that which cannot enter discourse, and in escaping the defiles of the signifier, remains silent. However, the assertion that "Even after Freud . . . autobiography has remained a consciously contrived kind of text and 'may, indeed, become a defense against true self-revelation'"<sup>83</sup> casts that silence differently. Myth-making may indeed protect other truths, something which Gladys perhaps ingenuously acknowledges in *My Place*. Despite Muecke's concern that "if we question the motives of this or that character, [our comments will] be taken as criticisms of real people,"<sup>84</sup> Gladys concedes that "I know I cannot retract what has been written, it's no longer mine" (306). Contrary to being a loss of control, this may well signify freedom from self-definition or self-fixing through the discourse of the text: Gladys can be recognised as a

character, not a 'real person'. Her only connection to the Gladys of the text is discursive, the legal tie of the Symbolic.

Therefore, while the discourses of *My Place* can in many ways be read as resistant, it is also beneficial, in the context of the increasing post-colonial solicitation of 'Aboriginal' discourse, to read post-colonised discursive terrain in terms of demarcated territories of silence. As silence, they use impenetrability as resistance to the control and imposed silences of 'visibility', and the dangers of appropriation, or discursive re-colonisation.

### 5. V. Hybrid Discourses of Resistance and Redemption.

Discourses of resistance cannot be understood as radically other than the dominant or repressive discourses they resist. Of necessity, there is a meeting on common ground, even if it is the ground of struggle or battle, and in this meeting each acknowledges, and thus is implicated in the construction of, the other. In this way, discourses, whether dominant or oppositional, comprise strategies of both power and resistance: there is, as Foucault's analysis of power has shown, "no easy division between a dominant and essentially repressive discourse, and one oppositional, pure voice of liberation." Instead, as one commentator has put it, power is characterised as "a multiplicity of force relations, the interplay of various discursive fields with their immanent necessities and developments. Power and authority are no longer vested in a central point. . . . Nor does resistance arise from a single point."<sup>85</sup> This analysis of power and resistance as dispersed through subjectivities and discourses has already been related to the settler post-colonial context; however, it may be reiterated that settler post-colonialism produces historically and culturally hybrid subjects, and similarly hybrid discourses of opposition and complicity.

Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* is a novel of resistant and redemptive discourses. As a novel of post-colonial hybridity, the place and functioning of language is a principal exemplar of tensions and ambivalences. Clearly, to be redemptive, there must be posited or at least implied, a preceding 'Fall'. Further, a discourse of resistance is, first of all, *discourse*, and is, as Chapter One argued, therefore the sign of a 'Fall' from the plenitude of pre-Symbolic origins, returning symptomatically through the Symbolic order. The redemptive subject (or text) may be seen as seeking to

reconnect with those origins through language, which is paradoxically the point of separation, or Fall. The spiral structure of origins, Fall, and redemption ('origins') which characterises *The Bone People* is suggested in the evocation of Biblical beginnings: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John, I:i). However, in the post-colonial New Zealand context, origins are posited as Maori, while the Christian originary Word is contemporaneous with colonisation, and thus represents the Fall itself. Therefore, as the novel opens, even 'The Beginning' is not what it seems; it is, as the Prologue makes clear, 'The End'. Similarly, it is neither the pure, true Word of truth, nor is it the Word which anticipates Redemption in its own terms. For Simon, the Word -- Logos -- was carried on the "nightmare voice. The vivid haunting terrible voice" (5), and it was deceptive, as it "seemed to murmur endearments all the while the hands skilfully and cruelly hurt him" (5). For Joe, "IN THE BEGINNING, it was a tension, an element of strain" (6), while Kerewin "HAD DEBATED, in the frivolity of the beginning, whether to build a hole or a tower" (7). In all three cases, words deceive, strain against or struggle with 'the Real', or engage in active opposition (enter the condition of discourse). Similarly, each character's relationship with language as represented in these beginnings, mirrors the complex alienations and dislocations in language which constitute their subjectivities. Just as language is not wholly what it seems, but is a doubled tool of fracture or subjective alienation, and repair or subjective constitution, the characters' relations to language and silence are multiple and ambivalent. Both language and silence have many meanings in *The Bone People*, and as a result, subjectivities are the unstable positionings of complicity with and resistance to, just as they embody the cultural and historical violence of, colonisation.

For Kerewin, The Word is frivolous: language is both the object and the vehicle of her virtuosity. She invents words, placing them in idiosyncratic phrasing, such as "A right piratical-looking eschewball I suppose I look" (21), and she hunts out obscure, technical or other specialised words, so that she can use phrases like "'O you ichthyphagal numbskull'" (23). Her mastery of language gives her pleasure, evoked in the rhyming or assonant incantations she produces and lingers on even when alone in contemplation: "'Lichen-bole; gow-worms' hole; bonsai grove'" (18); and in the self-indulgent linguistic movement from description to invention, to evoke, significantly, meaninglessness:

"Gimcrack trumpery in gold and azure and scarlet and a glory silver ... becasually nerthing is ... " (418). Language also confers power. As she observes to a bewildered Simon, "'obfuscation is my trade. I didn't get to be thirty odd and horridly rich by being intelligible'" (24). However, it has also isolated her in its use as sheer display rather than communication, so that Simon wonders, "What does she talk like that for? To fool me? and shakes his head in exasperation. Kerewin's multisyllables were, for the main part, going straight in one ear and out the other" (38). On the other hand, communication only too well by language-as-weapon has had the same isolating effect: "Why did I lose my temper that night and wound everybody with words and memories?" (167). Kerewin's wall of language is both protection, as Joe observes: "Aue! Trust her to wriggle away under the cover of words" (243), but also her prison, as Kerewin herself occasionally senses: "'Wordplayer,' she says sourly. 'Mere quoter'" (92).<sup>86</sup> The pleasure conferred by her mastery of language is the phallogocentric pleasure symbolised by her similarly phallic tower-home, in which she is intellectually, emotionally and spiritually imprisoned.

Kerewin's silence is also ambivalent. This silence most noticeably and notoriously surrounds her discovery of the beatings Simon endures from Joe, and it bears many meanings. It is a reluctance to become "involved" (149), which holds dangers for her: "Find a friend, grow a friendship, and something intervenes to twist it, kill it" (149), and thus it can be understood as a silence of complicity. On the other hand, it is an acknowledgement of the inadequacy or even dangers for Joe and Simon which attend the consequences of speaking out:

I could tell Joe, but not tell anyone else.

Who else to tell anyway? The fuzz? The welfare? That means the experts get to wade in, but how does the section in the Crimes Act go? Something about assault on a child, carries a sentence maximum five years, child removed from environment detrimental to physical or mental health and well-being ... sheeit and apricocks, that's no answer. (149)

Finally, silence is an even more reliable index than words of Kerewin's outrage: "She thinks, I'll wait. I'll do nothing except watch out for the brat. Say nothing to Joe but wait for a good time to tell him my mind on the whole bloody thing. Preferably with my fists" (151). Therefore, silence and violence are doubly linked through the inactive and active complicity

of the former with the latter. Both speech and silence are ambivalent strategies in Kerewin's life, most dramatically represented in her refusal of simple solutions to the problem of Joe's violence against Simon.

Joe's own speech is characterised by the linguistic markers of social and cultural alienation. His use of language is rarely frivolous in the way that Kerewin's is, although at a point when he attempts to lighten a heavy atmosphere, his contemplations of an eclectic pile of reading material in Kerewin's bach at Moeraki echo her style of rhyming word-play: "Piles of Giles, two Leunigs, and an early Searle" (181). More characteristically, Kerewin first identifies him as a voice in the pub, "in the middle of a drunken anecdote" (12), whose swearing strikes her as sadly excessive, while lexically limited:

Why this speech filled with bitterness and contempt? You hate English, man? I can understand that but why not do your conversing in Maori and spare us this contamination? No swear words in that tongue.... there he goes again. Ah hell, the fucking word has its place, but all the time?... aue. (12)

Joe's linguistic alienation from his Maori cultural origins is further evoked in his avowed awkwardness in expressing emotions or communicating in intimate situations adequately in English. The Maori language is redemptive, a healing of that rift, in being 'subjectively' coterminous with such expression. It is also, in its intimacy or sincerity, privileged as *true* expression. Thus he tells Kerewin, who has minded Simon, and listened to Joe's story of their background, "'I don't know how to say thank you except this way.' He says very formally, 'Ka whakapai au kia koe mo tau atawhai'" (62). Later he tells Kerewin he has a present for her, a surprise: "'I'll give you a clue. He ata koa iti, he pounamu.' His voice has grown stronger and more relaxed with each word" (281). Similarly, Simon likens the sound of an old man speaking Maori to Joe in a good mood at home (176-7). Although Joe's monotonous swearing is the 'silence' which is the absence of presence of *true* discourse, and stands as a sign of that absence, another example of the absence of presence of speech is read more correctly as a protective strategy. Following his reporting of the death of the kaumatua to the police, and their probing questions and speculations, Joe deflects their interest with a flippant remark, then thinks, "Forgive me, Tiaki. But if we keep talking this way, they might get curious about some of your other secrets. Kill it with a foolish joke...." (379). Thus



like *My Place*, *The Bone People* posits the sacred-secret silence of resistance to discursive or cultural incursion.

Just as Kerewin is characterised by her garrulousness and linguistic virtuosity, Simon is most strikingly identified by his silence. Yet the profundity of this silence can only be explained in terms of its multiple significations. Even in its ubiquity, there are differences and degrees to which he refuses speech. The most obvious 'interpretation' of his silence is that his voice has somehow violently and traumatically been wrested from him, suggested in Joe's explanation that "The ENT bloke who examined him said there was no physical reason to prevent him from speaking. He's got all the gear needed, eh. But if he vocalises, he throws up, and violently" (86). The impression of some mysterious trauma in his past is supported by his similarly abject response apparently to Kerewin's use of French to speak 'past' him to Joe. Simon has hurt himself badly on a fish hook:

'Sheeit,' says Kerewin, 'we'll have to go back. You can't have the bloody pauvre petit en souffrant like that,' and the child's eyes snap open. They're black and blank and his face has twisted in terror. He jolts out of his father's arms as though he's been banged with a cattle prod and falls against the side of the boat. Next minute, he's spewing his heart out over the gunwales. (209)

Thus it is not simply his own speech he refuses, but the ability of language to violate him. A further 'refusal' which could explain his silence is that of resistance through absence. If he disavows subjectivity, he refuses to constitute the very entity which is the object of violence and the subject of pain. In refusing to unify his perceiving subjectivity with his perceived objectivity, he remains somehow outside of the hurting body, preserving some undamaged part of himself.

The phonocentric conception of speech which underpins this novel (though as will be demonstrated, the Logos is culturally determined), privileges the voice precisely because the truth of the self is projected on the voice from the interiority of that self into the field of the Other.<sup>87</sup> Its impact is in *entering* the Other's body (via the ears), so that oral communication is effected through its emanation from and access to the interiority of the self. However, if the voice is regarded as a part of the bodily self, its projection out and into the body of the Other may be felt as a threatening split of the body's integrity, and loss of subjective self-mastery.

There are sufficient indications of early bodily injury suffered by Simon, as well as the injuries incurred in Joe's beatings, to argue that Simon keeps his voice within himself as a protective strategy of bodily integrity. The physical-psychical basis of this fear is also consistent with Simon's willingness to communicate through a signing system, a body-language produced only from the 'exterior' of his body, and remaining in the interval of space between subjects which allows it to be perceived visually by the recipient, whose *point of view* must remain at a distance from, or outside the message/image itself. The same reasoning can be applied to Simon's grudging acceptance of the occasional necessity of writing to make his meaning clear. There is an obvious implication that writing, in failing to produce the truth of the presence of the subject, in being 'secondary' or 'derivative' to primal speech, is not threatening to subjective integrity in the same way that spoken language is. Simon's silence could therefore be posited as akin to an attempt to remain in, or return to, the pre-mirror-stage plenitude of origins and wholeness.

However, *The Bone People* is not primarily a representation of the subject of an individual case of child abuse: indeed, Simon is arguably less of a 'character' than a force or an agent of redemption.<sup>88</sup> Although the discussion of his silence as resistant or protective strategy as well as index of victimhood has been intended to evoke the multiple meanings of silence surrounding Simon, rather than simply attaching naturalistic links of cause and effect, it is necessary to read his silence in relation to the events of the novel as a whole. Simon functions not simply as (resisting) victim but as positive agency in the novel, and for this reason his silences should be scrutinised for their meanings beyond resistance or refusal, and instead in relation to that agency. For example, Simon's attempt to preserve or restore his own wholeness parallels his function in the novel as a unifying force in relation to Kerewin and Joe as (divided) individuals, and the three of them as a group.<sup>89</sup>

Throughout much of *The Bone People*, Kerewin is emotionally, spiritually and physically 'at war with herself'. She both feels herself to be so, and is seen by Joe in these terms. The narrative enters Kerewin's consciousness, as she contemplates her chosen solitude, finding herself confronted with feelings she would rather suppress than admit:

It's an odd macabre kind of existence. While the nights away in drinking and fill the days with petty killing. Occasionally, drink out a day and then go and hunt all night, just for the change.

She shakes her head.

Who cares? That's the way things are now. (I care). (13)<sup>90</sup>

Later, Joe observes her from a distance as she stands on a "black tongue of rock" near the sea, a "strange person in blue denims, sometimes obscured by mist from the waves that explode like geysers in the blowhole. She looks tense and desperately unhappy. Like she's at war with herself. Like a sword wearing itself out on its sheath" (187). There is the suggestion that her emotional state is not only visible, but is also somehow tied in with, or responsible for the cancer which grows in her. Even this illness can be understood as the body at war with itself -- the production by the body of tissue which is both excessive and hostile to, while being part of 'itself'. Similarly, in her attempts to pacify it, "She bought antihistamines as soon as the chemist opened, and spent the day feeling doped and sluggish, and especially, at war with herself" (412).

Joe is similarly divided within himself, remembering, for example, "the sadsweet months with Taki. I knew it was wrong, I know it was unnatural, but he was gentle, he was kind, I loved him and it was good" (175). However, for a number of reasons Joe's fractured 'self' is more clearly the fracture of and from his cultural origins, so that he feels contradictory cultural, emotional and intellectual impulses, themselves only partial or incomplete. His life is represented as an attempt to create one complete picture out of the pieces of two different, incomplete jigsaw puzzles. For example, he tells Kerewin that Simon is

'Scared of ghosts and things in dreams ... If I was a proper Maori I'd ...'  
 Into the following silence,  
 'You'd what?'  
 'Hah, I don't know.' He laughed quietly. 'Maybe take him to people who'd know what to do, to keep off the ghosts in dreams.' Laughing again, a dry unfunny sound like a cough, 'See? Bloody superstitious Nga Bush? Get the Maori a bad name, eh?' (61)

The alienation from himself in this passage is evoked in the "unfunny" laughter, while the cultural alienation is implicit in the inclination towards, but loss of uncritical acceptance of traditional practices. Further, the acknowledgement of the dominance of rational discourse is suggested

in his reference to the 'bad name' conferred on 'superstitious' Maori by the subjects of that discourse.

While Joe's cultural alienation is more manifest, it could be argued that Kerewin's is more complete. Her manner of living implies the museumification of cultural taonga as artifacts she keeps locked away. Their status is relegated that that of part of her eclectic collection of objects whose value is in their inventory, and further, to her fascination with and indulgence in linguistic exoticisms:

She opens the lid, her heart thudding. On trays in the pale pool of light, a hundred smooth and curvilinear shapes.

Two meres, patu pounamu, both old and named, still deadly.  
Many stylised hook pendants, hei matau.  
Kuru, and kapeu, and kurupapa, straight and curved neck pendants.  
An amulet, a marakihau; and a spiral pendant, the koropepe.  
A dozen chisels. Four fine adzes.

....

Jade of my heart, your names a litany of praise; kahurangi; kawakawa; raukaraka; tangiwai, auhunga, inanga, kahotea; totoweka and ahauhunga... (33)

Yet further she is not easily conferred through visible signification with the status of even alienated or dislocated Maoriness. In other words, because she does not *look* particularly Maori -- she is "blue-eyed, brown-haired, and mushroom pale" (62) -- she is not easily identified as such, and indeed feels the need to assert it:

Shrouded in smoke, the brown faces stare at her with bright unfriendly eyes.

'Tena koutou, tena koutou,' she says, 'tena koutou katoa.' As always she wants to whip out a certified copy of her whakapapa, preferably with illustrative photographs (most of her brothers, uncles, aunts and cousins on her mother's side, are much more Maori looking than she is). 'Look! I really am one of you,' she could say. 'Well, at least some of me is ...' (112)

Therefore, while the visible 'signs' of Maoriness are produced in discriminatory relations, they may also serve as a cultural 'safe-guard' or back-up recognition *by* Maori. Without this, her isolation is exacerbated. Kerewin and Joe are *both* products of the racial and cultural fragmentations effected by colonisation:

'I feel all Maori. Or,' she looked down into the drink, 'I used to. Now it feels like the best part of me has got lost in the way I live.'

Joe was very still; so softly, that it was almost on a level with his breathing,

'That's the way I feel most of the time.' More loudly, 'My father's father was English, so I'm not yer 100% pure. But I'm Maori. And that's the way I feel too, the way you said, that the Maoritanga has got lost in the way I live.' (62)

These fragmentations and contradictions are carried to violent extreme and acted out on and around the body of Simon. Joe loves and viciously beats Simon; he has lost "korero . . . . our tribe's famous talk-it-out with all concerned" (273). Kerewin's illness makes its presence violently felt during a fight she has with Joe, a fight provoked by Simon and joined by Kerewin in a combination of defence of Simon against Joe's blows and her own spoiling for battle. Gloating over her victory, she is suddenly gripped by pain, and falls in "a simulacrum of Joe's agony" (192).

However, Simon's silence is also complicit with the beatings he receives. When Kerewin discovers welts on his body, Simon unequivocally instructs her, "NO DOCTOR JOE OK IM OK" (115; also 146), so that he not only 'protects' Joe from the official discovery of the beatings, but even places concern for, and acknowledgement of Joe's well-being ahead of his own. In this way, Simon's silence can be re-read, not as self-preservation, but as self-sacrifice: in physical terms because he suffers and sometimes provokes the beatings which culminate in the one so severe that there is no avoidance of institutional intervention; and in subjective terms because Simon eschews the power of language to traverse the space between perceiving and perceived selves and its partial repair of the split between them which instigates subjectivity. In the former instance, which is consistent with readings of Simon as a Christ-figure,<sup>91</sup> Simon, the 'innocent' nearly 'dies for' the 'sins' of Joe and Kerewin, and catalyses a series of events that result in the possibility of their 'redemption': Joe, after a period in jail, attempts suicide and is saved by Tiaki Mira, an elderly kaumatua, in order to receive his mantle; Kerewin's illness brings her near death, but she too receives healing and redemptive intervention.<sup>92</sup> In terms of the sacrifice of subjectivity, it is as though Simon's presence -- signified in his voice -- must not be allowed to prevent the violence against him; as though he must remain the force which enables the healing of Joe and Kerewin, effects Kerewin's membership of her local community (94), and ultimately secures his goal of bringing Kerewin and

Joe together so that they constitute a group. It is through, or even *into* Simon's 'absence' that presence-to-the-self may emerge: "One thing about having Himi for your child: you learn to read what people meant but didn't say./ 'I am Kerewin the stony and I never cry. I want to like or even love you, but I don't trust anyone now' (243). Conversely, Simon both merges himself with, and is merged with by Kerewin and Joe, both of these reinforcing the absence of his own presence. Kerewin's 'voice' merges into his consciousness, so that he thinks to himself in her idiosyncratic style, though with his child-like echolalic 'misappropriation', "Where the unprintable as Kere says did I put that berloody jersey. I remember, end of the bed. . . . Yeah, I'd believe it. On the berloody apricock floor" (177). Observing Joe tending Simon, Kerewin wonders at "That curious impersonal property sense parents display over their young children's bodies ... check this, examine that, peer here, clean there, all as though it's an extension of their own body they're handling, not another person ... " (197). Indeed, she notes, despite the pain Simon must be feeling, "the weird thing is, it's Joe who sucks his breath in each time, as though it was him that was hurting" (198).

Simon is 'absent' to Kerewin and Joe, other than as an intermediary between them, illustrated when Kerewin "raises her gaze, and Simon's gesture leads it on to the other person, waiting quietly on the threshold" (46). However, although Simon is the absent centre around which Kerewin and Joe stabilise, he is, in the moments of achievement of unity between them, almost painfully present to himself: "The elation . . . . had come to a climax last night when her hand and Joe's had touched, with him aching and unsteady and overwhelmed with joy in the centre" (73). His sacrificial and catalysing function is explicitly acknowledged later in the novel, when he reflects that "He has worked at keeping them together whatever the cost" (395).

There is, therefore, in relation to all three characters, an ambivalent but strategic negotiation of speech and silence. Both are complicit with dislocation and pain, and both also heal and redeem. However, the structure of 'Fall' and 'Redemption' in *The Bone People* as it relates to language as well as cultural wholeness more generally, is clearly one which posits pre-lapsarian *Maori* origins.

The contrast of 'Maori' and 'Pakeha' values occurs in contexts which posit the latter as a Fall from Maori cultural plenitude: that effected by colonisation and its solidification into the institutionalised discourses of colonialism. The benefits of 'knowledge' instigated by the subjective/cultural split also have their price, as Kerewin discovers: "I won a lottery. I invested it. I earned a fortune by fast talking. And while I was busy blessing the god of munificence, the lightning came. It blasted my family, and it blasted my painting talent. I went straight out of one bind into a worse one" (28). Joe similarly believes a price has been paid for his adherence to Pakeha values and priorities. He tells Kerewin that

'If I could start from the beginning . . . you know what I'd do? I'd stop work. Stay home most of the time. I was thinking yesterday, what a waste it all was ... I'd worked hard, pakeha fashion, for nearly six solid years, making money to make a home. And the one thing I never made was a home.' (324)

It is the kaumatua, Tiaki Mira, who rescues Joe and prepares him for his place as guardian of the sacred canoe and the mauri it holds, who places this Fall from the edenic "shining land" that was Aotearoa within a more broadly mythic-historical, and a more clearly cultural and political rather than individual, context:

'I was taught that it was the old people's belief that this country, and our people, are different and special. That something very great had allied itself with some of us, had given itself to us. But we changed. We ceased to nurture the land. We fought among ourselves. We were overcome by white people in their hordes. We were broken and diminished. We forgot what we could have been, that Aotearoa was the shining land.' (364)<sup>93</sup>

As a result, his people were "'no longer Maori. They were husks, aping the European manners and customs. Maori on the outside, with none of the heart left'" (359). This echoes Joe's and Kerewin's nostalgic laments that, despite any wealth or success in Pakeha terms, in losing their Maoritanga that have lost "the best part of me" (62; 344), the "main part" (63).

Consequently, the terms of Redemption are 'Maori': however, the Maori is, of necessity, that which knows and acknowledges, even as it disavows, its own status as post-colonial symptomatic discourse, as sign of its own loss of originary plenitude. The 'knowledge' passed from the kaumatua to Joe is filled with the signs of its own hybrid reconstruction;

the doubled voice of Maori resistant, recuperative struggle and colonising intervention. This discursive doubling is shown in the anticipation and disavowal of rational explanations for events of Maori spiritual significance. Joe's defensive reference to his belief in dream-ghosts has been noted; similarly, Kerewin describes to Joe her discovery of a special piece of greenstone:

'I was just going onto the reef for pupu and a wave uncovered it at my feet -- when I picked it up, there seemed to be voices all around me saying 'Te tahoro ruku! Te tahoro ruku!' It was bright sunlight, I wasn't drunk, and there were people further out on the reef who didn't look round or anything, so the voices must have been in my head. But they were loud. They echoed... .' (253)

She therefore manifests the consciousness, through anticipation of others' doubt or scepticism, that there may be rational or naturalistic explanations. Both implied explanations are symptomatic, in their specificity, of Pakeha intervention: the advent of alcohol and psychiatry. However, again it is the kaumatua who most clearly evokes the hybridity of post-colonial Maori discourse. On the one hand he is associated with Maori *origins*, and even a transcendental status suited to his trans-historical function, through for example, his "two parallel blue lines across . . . [his] face. A truly archaic moko, te moko-a-Tamatea", while Joe had "thought the people who had worn that tattoo dead for centuries" (346). On the other hand, the kaumatua himself acknowledges and accounts for the *breaks* with cultural convention or orthodoxy in the very sources of his knowledge in his grandmother:

'Remember, it was a time of flux and chaos when she sought her knowledge. No-one can be blamed for giving her information that she maybe should never have known. And she can be praised for having the staunch courage and intelligence to preserve something she believed, as I believe, to be of unusual value. Incalculable value. How do you weigh the value of this country's soul?' (370)

Clearly the struggle for survival requires adaptations of cultural tradition in order to meet the unusual circumstances with which it is confronted by colonisation, and the kaumatua and, as will be shown, the novel, advocate this strategic flexibility. The most striking evocation of the loss of unself-conscious inhabiting of mythical time and discourse, and its replacement with entry into culturally self-conscious historical time and discourse, occurs with the kaumatua's accounts of what happens to the



spirit of a Maori person after death. This is prompted by Joe's admission that he is troubled by visitations by his dead wife's spirit in the form of a moth. To the kaumatua's explanation that, on death, "One goes north to Te Rerenga-wairua, down the grey root of Akakitererenga, onto the rock platform and into the sea. Into the sea-hole that leads into Te Reinga" (354), Joe responds with rational scepticism:

'It is all myths and legends,' says Joe, 'and I never liked any of it.'

'Tsk,' says the kaumatua, 'and your wife still returns to you as a moth?'

'Sometimes she turns into moths. Sometimes she decays in my arms. Sometimes she eats one of my sons and then starts on me, beginning at my privates. That is all business for a psychiatrist, maybe, but not any exemplar of Maori truths.' (354)

However, in disagreeing with Joe, the kaumatua narrates "three versions" of what happens after death, the first of which he concludes is "allegory, I think it means you journey on and on, becoming less human and more ... something else" (354). The second version, which includes a judgement followed by either heaven or hell, is regarded by the kaumatua as "cribbed. It doesn't sound quite Maori" (354). He concludes, "The third version, however, I like, therefore,' chuckle, 'it is more sophisticated'" (354). The possibility of alternative versions bespeaks a lack of unself-conscious, continuous faith in any one of them, leaving only the possibility of conscious, willed belief, which is also suspension of disbelief.<sup>94</sup> A literary term such as 'allegory' places the kaumatua in the position of knowing, rational subject, reading not Truth, but the 'fallen (literary) language' of trope. His assessment of the second version implies the intervention of Christianity and its forcing of, among other things, Maori spiritual self-consciousness or self-knowledge. The notion that one may express preference for a particular version and reflect this in the construction of its greater 'sophistication' is cynical rather than innocent, and again, self-conscious, as suggested by his chuckle. The loss of Maori spiritual plenitude (paradoxically evoked in an excess of 'truths') is therefore clear in his account even before he admits, fearing his own imminent death, "I have no faith in the old ways and no hope in the new" (355). Even in this admission, *faith*, something non-rational, is differentiated from *hope*, which is rational, so that there is, no matter how optimistic one may be, only a future founded on loss of or break from, cultural 'innocence'. This is crucial to the reading of the novel.

Much has been made by critics of the "spuriousness" of the Maori spiritual redemption posited in *The Bone People*. Mita has commented on its place in relation to the overall novel, expressing disappointment that "the catharsis through reawakening near the end of the book is not as integrated into the story as its other aspects,"<sup>95</sup> while Stead is critical of the points at which he feels "the novel has taken a dive from reality into wishful daydream." In particular and above all, he objects to

the sequence in which Joe comes close to death and then is rescued by an old Maori man who has waited his whole lifetime under semi-divine instruction to perform just this rescue, so he can pass on to the man he saves proprietorial rights over a piece of land and the talisman in which its spirit is preserved. . . . I found it, read either as Maori lore or as fiction, almost totally spurious.<sup>96</sup>

Stead's refusal of the Maori terms in which this episode is cast -- his use of 'old Maori man' rather than 'kaumatua', the general 'talisman' rather than specifying the culturally significant canoe and the god that came with it, and 'spirit' rather than the term 'mauri' used by the kaumatua (363) -- underscores his repudiation of the episode itself. However, if Hulme's use of Maori language and mythology seems to Stead "willed, self-conscious, not inevitable, not entirely authentic,"<sup>97</sup> it can be argued that the reason for this lies beyond Hulme in the history of colonisation, and further, that it is an overt thematic and structural constituent of the novel itself.

For example, Williams takes up Stead's allusion to the 'inauthenticity' of the novel's representation of Maori spirituality, and places a different light on it when he argues that, rather than emanating from Hulme's fanciful imagination, much of it bears the "imprint of the Pakeha reception and interpretation of that material."<sup>98</sup> He cites a number of textual sources for Hulme's representations.<sup>99</sup> However, he continues to take issue with specific departures from received notions of authentic (pre-colonial) Maori spirituality. In relation to the little god of which Joe is bequeathed guardianship, he argues that

As the pre-European Maori had no concept of New Zealand/Aotearoa as a unified entity . . . it is highly improbable that they would have held that there was a special god for the whole country . . . that there was a mauri for Aotearoa. Who would have guarded it? Where would it have been placed? The notion involves a transcending of tribal affiliations that was not possible till the arrival of the colonists made the Maori aware of their unity as well as their differences as a people.<sup>100</sup>

Precisely. Had Hulme attempted to construct or *retrieve* a spiritual and cultural redemption from before the fractures of colonisation, her novel would have been more open to the charge of eliding that history in favour of ahistorical idealism than can be made of the version she produces, full of, and acknowledging the disturbances and ambivalences of, hybridity.

One of these disturbances, indeed despite the spiritual eclecticism of the novel (Sufic mysticism, Buddhism) the principal one, is Christianity. It is Christianity which not only effected the earliest and most sustained interventions into Maori spirituality, but was also most readily and in a widespread way integrated by Maori, and institutionalised by what would become the dominant Pakeha culture. It would be a truly ingenious novel which successfully represented the spirituality of a settler post-colonised culture with no such 'contamination'. Of course, the reader is one source of this contamination: Simon evokes the Biblical Simon Peter; descriptions of him as "transfixed like a crucifix, 'standing stiff and straight like some weird saint in a stained gold window ... haloed in hair, shrouded in the dying sunlight' (14 [my edition, 16]),"<sup>101</sup> suggest Christianity and its institutionalisation, for a *reader attuned* to such imagery. Judith Dale argues, for example, that

the Christian response to the existence of evil and the moral and philosophical problem of its 'purpose' in the world is reworked in *the bone people* in a new way. A perennial and archetypal question achieves newly dramatic force: why do the innocent suffer? The traditional Christian answer involves ideas of the Fall, Original Sin, and the inheritance of guilt. . . . 'Salvation' is the ultimate outcome and justification of the existence of human suffering. In *the bone people*, it seems to me, Simon Peter . . . serves the function of a kind of 'saving' figure who effectively (though not consciously) turns pain to joy and hope for others, and is himself much damaged in the process.<sup>102</sup>

However, the ability of the writer whose subjectivity is produced within the settler post-colonial context to refuse such readings must be, at best, disavowal; in the case of Hulme's rejection of the reading of Simon as a 'Christ-figure',<sup>103</sup> it can only be read in terms of the limitations such an interpretation may impose, and is therefore a *strategic* gesture.

Dale's reference to the 'new way' in which Christian themes are reworked is not specified beyond the 'newness' of rejuvenation: "newly dramatic *force*." However, its recontextualisation in post-colonial

Aotearoa suggests the possibility of reading it as symbolic of colonisation -- the entry into an historical Symbolic order by way of colonisation. Thus the Fall is not a question of individual moral guilt and redemption sought through the salvation of the individual soul, so much as a cultural, historical, and political loss of innocence. Therefore, redemption is also differently accented as the product of *knowledge*. Hulme's strategic disavowal of Christianity effects a disturbance to the easy containment of the novel by a totalising explanatory system which both in itself and in relation to Maori spirituality, seeks to elide history.

The suggestion that Stead feels 'cheated' by the inauthenticity of representations of Maori spirituality is somewhat ironic, if the processes of colonisation -- of which he is a cultural heir -- are understood to have rendered unself-conscious authenticity forever inaccessible. As Margery Fee points out, questions of authenticity or inauthenticity in cultural contexts of settler post-colonialism are problematic, even unhelpful:

the idea of accurately or finally distinguishing authentic from inauthentic discourse [is] impossible: the ideal of 'authenticity' has been proven to be, like so many others, relative and context-bound. This does not leave us with nothing but language games. If the context is firmly kept in mind, it is possible to argue that to be classified as 'Fourth World,' writing must somehow promote indigenous access to power without negating indigenous difference.<sup>104</sup>

For example, with regard to Stead's criticism of the novel, Fee argues for a relativisation and historicisation of his literary and cultural assumptions. She points out that his "insistence that the Maori elements be 'unconscious,' rather than 'willed,' is essentially a demand to hear what seems 'natural' to him, that is 'authentic' accounts that echo the 'authentic' accounts he is used to -- those written by White anthropologists and those Pakeha writers who borrow this material."<sup>105</sup> Ironically, Williams finds precisely those anthropological echoes in his own reading of Hulme's representation of Maori lore and spirituality. He argues that "The Maori spiritual material in *the bone people* is not pure and unmediated, a direct link back to the source. It bears the imprint of the Pakeha reception and interpretation of that material."<sup>106</sup> However, this does not constitute a simple reinforcement of Stead's assertion of its inauthenticity: Stead's judgements regarding authenticity must inevitably be textually mediated, as Fee argues. However, Hulme's access to the

Maori spirituality she represents is similarly historically mediated. To claim that it could survive intact the effects of colonisation and its fractures of the traditional, communal oral and other conditions of its perpetuation, to surface in a 1980s novel seems ridiculously, and dangerously, essentialist. Indeed, one anthropologist has suggested that a number of so-called 'authentic' or largely unchallenged constituents of Maori traditional belief and mythology *entered* Maoridom already 'contaminated' by colonial inauthenticity, and have in fact *gained* their authenticity through adoption, absorption, and subsequent transmission. He suggests that

The image of Maori culture that developed around the turn of the 20th century was constructed in the main by scholars who were predisposed to analyze institutions in terms of long distance migrations and who cherished the political desire to assimilate Maoris into Pakeha culture. The present image has been invented for the purpose of enhancing the power of Maoris in New Zealand society, and is largely composed of those Maori qualities that can be attractively contrasted with the least desirable aspects of Pakeha culture.<sup>107</sup>

He goes on to claim that "the 'distortions' have been accepted by Maoris as authentic to their heritage."<sup>108</sup> Such an argument is bound to be contentious, for mythologies must preserve their unself-consciousness to function, and yet if the point is extracted that Maori beliefs have become irreversibly hybridised, and that authenticity need not derive from pure and unmediated origins, Maori discursive ground may be both enlarged and strengthened. Indeed, Stead's insistence that Hulme's representation of Maori spirituality be 'unconscious' implicitly requires that it conform to those conventions of discourse by which language effaces its own mediation of experience and observation, that her fiction be 'speakerly' rather than 'writerly'. This is, as has been shown, the demand that the dominant discourse has consistently made of those writing from and of minority positions, or positions of marginality.

*The Bone People*, as has been noted, is self-conscious about its own inauthenticities, if origins are invoked as guarantee of authenticity. Joe's scepticism is irreversible (though it may be masked); similarly, the kaumatua's cynicism is the product of a lost cultural innocence. Further, the inter-textual eclecticism of the novel's language and its field of reference constitutes it as a 'Fallen' or 'knowing' text, and evokes the

promiscuity of the Word-in-history. Webby has remarked on the wide range of intertextual allusions and references: J.R. Tolkein's hobbits; "the traditional damsel in distress, locked in a tower by the sea"; to *Robinson Crusoe*, when "Kerewin is made aware of Simon's intrusion on her solitude via discovering his sandal in the dust"; and the "literary associations" of the name, Holmes.<sup>109</sup> Stead is reminded by Kerewin's solitary tower existence, of Yeats,<sup>110</sup> while Williams, as well as many of those mentioned, and the Maori source-material referred to earlier, finds echoes of Masefield's 'Sea-Fever',<sup>111</sup> Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *The Tempest*,<sup>112</sup> and despite the novel's disavowals of its literary inheritance in 'Pakeha' culture, the novels of the 'Man Alone' theme by Pakeha males including Lee, Mulgan, Crump, and even early Stead.<sup>113</sup> There are many more elucidated by these and other critics, too many to list exhaustively, but the point made by Williams is already clear: *The Bone People* has been "painstakingly stitched together out of scraps and shards and flotsam and jetsam of *literature* that had been washed up on New Zealand shores from everywhere imaginable."<sup>114</sup> The language of the novel has been drawn from a similarly wide range of backgrounds. It has been criticised as "over-clever Joycean word-play,"<sup>115</sup> and praised precisely for the innovative uses and inventions of language.<sup>116</sup> More to the point here, Williams has demonstrated the 'promiscuity' of the novel's linguistic 'parentage' in its use of Anglo-Saxonisms, Latinate words, Scottish mediaevalisms, Old-French- and Greek-derived words, and those of Middle English origins; similarly, the novel employs specialised terminologies of medicine, pharmacopias, floral taxonomies, craft-derived terms, sporting and slang 'New Zealandisms', and of course, Maori language.<sup>117</sup>

If the very language of the novel is so contaminated, questions of original purity seem ridiculous. However, unification is a central theme in *The Bone People*, and it is a unification which acknowledges the diversity of disparate elements of a society and advocates conscious choice as both all that is available, but more positively, that which is more affirming of the many levels and spheres of difference in New Zealand/Aotearoa. The reader is interpellated by the novel's discourse of unification to participate in the reconstruction of something coherent out of the disconnected and partial elements of the 'story'. The Sherlock Holmes motif draws the reader into the 'mysteries' running through the novel. Although Kerewin's estrangement from her family and her reluctance in the face of contact with others are introduced in manners

which generate questions rather than providing answers (22; 24), it is the mystery surrounding Simon's background, and the events in the novel which bring the question to the narrative surface, which invokes the mystery genre in a more sustained and self-conscious way (87; 95; 210). There are also situations in which the hermeneutic activities of the reader provide more knowledge than Kerewin or Joe have amassed.

The notion that *The Bone People* comprises "different elements united by a prodigious authorial will [which offers] a *cultural* vision that suited the moment,"<sup>118</sup> is therefore not simply a structural observation on the text, but a central and conscious thematic principle underlying it. It is symbolised in Simon's understanding that frames the novel: in 'The End at the Beginning' it is explained that

They were nothing more than people by themselves. Even paired, any pairing, they would have been nothing more than people by themselves. But all together, they have become the heart and muscles and mind of something perilous and new, something strange and growing and great.

Together, all together, they are the instruments of change. (4)

Much further into the novel (though not in chronology), Simon reflects that

He doesn't know the words for what they are yet. Not family, not whanau ... maybe there aren't words for us yet? (E nga iwi o nga iwi, whispers Joe; o my serendipitous elf, serendipitous self, whispers Kerewin, we are the waves of future chance) he shakes the voices out of his head. But we have to be together. If we are not, we are nothing. We are broken. We are nothing. (395)

This passage introduces the crucial element of the togetherness posited: it is one of allegiance, the product of conscious choice, and thus transcends racial or sexual essentialism, or biologically or sexually determined bonds. The novel repudiates essentialism in many ways, from the unequivocal acceptance by Hana, then Joe, of Simon as their son (6), to Kerewin's Maori identification "'by heart, spirit, and inclination'" (62). Nor does it posit biological or sexual determinism: Joe plays both father and mother roles for Simon, and despite the beatings and his own physical size and strength, is also a gentle nurturer (57;198). On the other hand, Kerewin's 'neuter-ality' means that she has "'never been attracted to men. Or women. Or anything else. It's difficult to explain, and nobody has ever

believed it when I have tried to explain, but while I have an apparently normal female body, I don't have any sexual urge or appetite" (266). Therefore her link to Joe is not a sexually determined one, and further, as she explains of neuters, "we're kind to mother earth, and don't seek to stock her with replicas of self ... we're neither horned nor slatted, a twilight of the genders" (277). That this 'neutral' position is valued as strategic, rather than suffered as lack, is suggested in an explanatory gloss provided by Hulme in an interview:

A neuter to me is not so much standing o [sic] the fence as being on both sides of the track at once. You are then free to adopt whatever blend of qualities society deems to be specifically male or specifically female without being put on the line as to where your loyalties lie -- sexual loyalties lie -- you don't have them.<sup>119</sup>

Simon cannot think of a word to describe the new form of togetherness they represent, although Kerewin later suggests "commensalism," which she defines as "Common quarters wherein we circulate like corpuscles in one blood stream, joining (I won't say like clots) for food and drink and discussion and whatever else we feel like ... a way to keep unjoy at bay" (383). Therefore, despite the refusal of predictable forms of essentialism and determinism, the body metaphor in this passage suggests that the togetherness posited *is* an organic one. Similarly, it is one which chooses to privilege *Maori* values. It has already been shown that Kerewin and Joe both relate certain failures in their lives to their adherence to Pakeha values, and identify the 'best' or 'main' part of themselves as their Maoritanga. Further, the privileging of 'Maori' values does constitute a form of essentialism: they are held in opposition to 'Pakeha' values in a willed forgetfulness of their history of inter-relation. Maori values are overtly privileged as those in intimate harmony with the land and the spirit of the land, and it is the land which is the embodiment, or site, of the organic healing of the nation the novel envisages. Thus the kaumatua tells Joe,

'Maybe we have gone too far down other paths for the old alliance to be reformed, and this will remain a land where the spirit has withdrawn. Where the spirit is still with the land, but no longer active. No longer loving the land'. He laughs harshly. 'I can't imagine it loving the mess the Pakeha have made, can you?'

....

'No, it wouldn't like this at all. We might have started some of the havoc, but we never would have carried it so far. I don't think.' (371)



Even this contrast between Maori and Pakeha reveals doubts about the relative share of responsibility for the 'fallen' state of the country. However, the issue of blame is passed over in the novel in favour of recognition of the land as the basis of a national 'healing' or 'redemption', symbolised, for example, in the descriptions of wild (natural) herbs gathered and prepared to heal wounds (118) and sickness (161), and in the use of pieces of wood to bind Joe's broken arm (342). Significantly, Joe's broken arm is the result of a fall, or symbolically, a descent into the land, which precedes his discovery and healing by the kaumatua, a healing which is not simply physical, but spiritual and cultural (340-9). Similarly, Kerewin is healed of her cancer by an old woman/man who asks her "'What do you love?'" (423). Despite the kaumatua's fears that the love of the land has gone, Kerewin's redemptive answer is that she loves "'Very little. The earth. The stars. The sea. Cool classical guitar. Throbbing flamenco. Any colour under the sun or hidden deep in the breast of my mother Earth. Ah Papa my love'" (423). If she has not completely renounced her love of material and physical comforts, she has at least given priority to the land. The old visitor gives her a "sour brew," possibly of redcurrant juice, without Kerewin's chemical "'additives,'" and then vanishes (425). Kerewin is then hailed by the land and to the land:

Haere mai!  
Nau mai!  
Haere mai!

an earthdeep bass. (426)

Following a dream of an unknown landscape, sprouting under her touch the new buildings of a rebuilt marae, "onto the land as sweet and natural as though they'd grown there", she wonders, "Where is the land I am invited to?" (428). However, it is not simply a specific land to which she is called, but to *the* land, and to *the* people, as to the *Maori* in her origins. This has been foreshadowed in her earlier dreams of the marae at the heart of the island of Maukiekie, the body imagery here supported by her perception of the "'island breathing, or Papa herself'" (254). At the end of the dreams, which she did not understand, a great voice tells her, "'Keria! Keria!" (254), thereby linking her to Joe's redemption by the kaumatua who has looked for a "digger" as well as the "broken man."

The drawing of elements of the text, not least the characters themselves, into a final togetherness is symbolised in the tricephalos

Kerewin sculpts: "Beads of clay flattened, beads of clay raised. Day by day, the three faces grow. The blunt blind features become definite, refined, awake./Back of head to back of head to back of head: a tricephalos" (314). The heads are those of Kerewin, Joe and Simon. The final scene of the novel is one of family meeting and resolution, and the formation of a new togetherness among Joe, Simon and Kerewin, as Kerewin "offered them both that unlikely gift, her name" (444). That this is described by Kerewin as simply good sense underscores the novel's insistence on this conscious act of allegiance as the path to a more general healing of cultural and historical wounds. The conclusion is an optimistic pointing to such a new beginning:

Reaching out with one hand to join us, 'Ka ao, ka ao, ka awatea....'  
It is dawn, indeed it is dawn, and bright broad daylight braiding our home.'

TE MUTUNGA -- RANEI TE TAKE. (445)

*The Bone People* therefore adopts an essentialist standpoint of privileged Maori values as the way to national-cultural redemption, at the same time positing it as a matter of allegiance, necessarily one of conscious choice. The value of the Maori essentialism has been in constructing a discursive territory of contestation, and a discourse of difference for the post-colonised culture and its subjects, resisting its easy subsumption under totalising Pakeha cultural and institutional formations. However, at the same time, the novel consciously undercuts its own essentialist propositions, in the (inter)textual recognition of the history of cultural interruption, intervention and fragmentation which has resulted in the hybridity of Maori discourse. Because it is self-conscious, as has been shown, this should not be read as the *inauthenticity* of its Maori discourse, but as the strategic negotiation of the difference of Maori to Pakeha, and the difference of Maori to itself. It is an enactment of the particular *différance* of settler post-colonial culture.

The discussion of post-colonial discourses in Section Two of this thesis has focused on questions of positionality: position as 'self' or 'other' in relation to the 'dominant discourse' and to its institutionalisation within the hegemonic culture. However, the specific value of subject-positions, and the discourses which articulate them, was shown to be more complex than the authorisation of the 'self' and the marginalisation of the 'other'. The post-colonial anxiety concerning authenticity and belonging has

resulted in both the discursive valorisation of the (position of the) other of the dominant settler cultures -- which may amount to an appropriation of that position which parallels the appropriation of the indigenous place on the land -- and the author-isation of the discourses of Nation's Others (the identities 'produced' by the exclusions of National identity, and which 'return' in post-colonialism), in which processes of 'self-making' and of the reaffirmation of belonging are both complicit with, and subversive of, discursive and textual hegemonies. Chapter Five concluded with a discussion of *The Bone People* which specified 'hybridity' as a problematic which informs these ambivalences. In Section Three of the thesis I examine, not so much specific post-colonial discourses, as problem(atic)s which characterise their construction and articulation. Chapter Six, the first chapter in that section, continues the discussion of hybridity which began in Chapter Five, positing it as a problematic of settler post-colonial subjectivity and discourse.

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Notes.

- <sup>1</sup> Alice Munro, *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971; Rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982). Referred to as *Lives* in the text.
- <sup>2</sup> See the discussion of Bhabha's notion of mimicry, in Chapter One.
- <sup>3</sup> Geoff Hancock, "An Interview with Alice Munro," *Canadian Fiction Magazine*, 43, (1982), p. 112. Also, in "Heirs of the Living Body: Alice Munro and the Question of a Female Aesthetic," in Judith Miller (ed.), *The Art of Alice Munro* (Waterloo, Ont.: University of Waterloo Press, 1984), Barbara Godard says, "Emily Bronte was castigated for writing about passion as a woman, a wheel upon which Alice Munro has also turned" (p. 58). See also the interview with Alice Munro, "What Is," in Alan Twigg, *For Openers* (Madiera Park, B.C.: Harbor Publishing, 1988), p. 15.
- <sup>4</sup> See also Godard, "Heirs of the Living Body," p. 43.
- <sup>5</sup> For example, as a point of connection between this chapter and Chapter Three, Annette Kolodny points to "a daily reality of harmony between man and nature based on experience of the land as essentially feminine -- that is, not simply the land as mother, but the land as woman, the total female principle of gratification -- enclosing the individual in an environment of receptivity, repose, and painless integral satisfaction." See Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 4.
- <sup>6</sup> See Beverly Rapsorich, *Dance of the Sexes: Art and Gender in the Fiction of Alice Munro* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1990), p. 160. See also W.R. Martin, *Alice Munro: Paradox and Parallel* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1987), pp. 75-6.
- <sup>7</sup> Martin, p. 75.
- <sup>8</sup> Helen Tiffin, "Recuperative Strategies in the Post-Colonial Novel," *Inventing Countries: Essays in Post-Colonial Literatures*, SPAN, 24 (1987), p. 33.
- <sup>9</sup> Interview with Alice Munro, in Graeme Gibson, *Eleven Canadian Novelists* (Toronto: Anansi, 1973), p. 258.
- <sup>10</sup> Estelle Jelinek, "Introduction: Women's Autobiography and the Male Tradition," in Jelinek (ed.), *Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 17.
- <sup>11</sup> Rapsorich, p. 161, 166.
- <sup>12</sup> Godard, "Heirs of the Living Body," p. 52.
- <sup>13</sup> Rapsorich, p. 92. My formulation does not address the relative status of women's and men's cultural production in Maori tradition, but a post-colonial 'monolithic' Maori culture in relation to the institutionally dominant Pakeha one.
- <sup>14</sup> Rapsorich, p. 93.
- <sup>15</sup> See Chapter Six for further discussion of a feminine subjective morphology.
- <sup>16</sup> Rapsorich, p. 13.

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- 17 Tiffin, "Recuperative Strategies," p. 30.
  - 18 See Coral Ann Howells, *Private and Fictional Words: Canadian Women Novelists of the 1970s and 1980s* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 76, for a description of Lives as "Ontario Gothic." See also Rapsorich, pp. 134-7.
  - 19 Note that such gynaecological and other women's medical stories were a feature of the discourses among women in *Oracles and Miracles*.
  - 20 Howells, p. 77.
  - 21 Rapsorich, p. 136.
  - 22 Rapsorich, p. 136.
  - 23 Paul Smith, *Discerning the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 138.
  - 24 See Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982), pp. 37-8; p. 65.
  - 25 Berys Heuer, *Maori Women* (Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1972), p. 22.
  - 26 J. Prytz Johansen, *The Maori and His Religion in its Non-Ritualistic Aspects* (København: E. Munksgaard, 1954), p. 161.
  - 27 Prytz Johansen, p. 172.
  - 28 Heuer, p. 22.
  - 29 Sydney Moko Mead, "The Ebb and Flow of Mana Maori and the Changing Context of Maori Art," in Mead (ed.), *Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections* (Auckland: Heinemann, 1984), pp. 28-9.
  - 30 See Ong, pp. 71-3.
  - 31 Tiffin, "Recuperative Strategies," p. 27.
  - 32 This motif, also important in Hulme's *The Bone People*, will be elaborated on in discussion of that novel.
  - 33 See Hans Mol, *The Fixed and the Fickle: Religion and Identity in New Zealand* (Dunedin: Pilgrims South Press, 1982), pp. 23-4, for a brief summary of the Maui myth.
  - 34 Anne Salmond, *Hui: A Study of Maori Ceremonial Gatherings* (Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1975), p. 40.
  - 35 Mark Williams, *Leaving The Highway: Six Contemporary New Zealand Novelists* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1990), p. 18.
  - 36 Kristjana Gunnars, "Laura Goodman Salverson's confessions of a divided self," in Shirley Neumann and Smaro Kamboureli (eds), *A/Mazing Space: Writing Canadian / Women Writing* (Edmonton: Longspoon NeWest, 1986), p. 148. Also in relation to the Confession, Christopher Norris writes that "it is the nature of narrative 'excuses' -- the fiction masquerading as honest self-scrutiny -- which provides a handle for deconstructive

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reading. To 'confess' is to indulge in a series of self-justifying utterances which claim to be sincere, or to offer direct access to the writer's memories and conscience. Yet confessions are always, in some sense, a strategy designed to 'excuse' the penitent by placing his guilt in a narrative context that explains it, and thus dissolves responsibility. Such excuses run the danger that 'they will indeed exculpate the confessor, thus making the confession (and the confessional text) redundant as it originates'" (in *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*, p. 107).

37 Mary Mason, "The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers," in James Olney (ed.), *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 210.

38 Gunnars, p. 150.

39 Barbara Godard, "The Politics of Representation: Some Native Canadian Women Writers," *Canadian Literature*, No. 124-125 (1990), p. 220.

40 Margaret Miller, "Threads of Identity in Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior*," *biography*, 6, No. 1 (1983), p. 14.

41 See Margaret Miller, p. 23.

42 Joan Newman, "Reader Response to Transcribed Oral Narrative: *A Fortunate Life* and *My Place*," *Southerly*, 48, No. 4 (1988), p. 383.

43 Stephen Muecke, "Aboriginal Literature and the Repressive Hypothesis," *Southerly*, 48, No. 4 (1988), p. 413.

44 Barbara Godard, "Voicing difference: the literary production of native women," in Neumann and Kamboureli (eds), p. 103.

45 See James Olney, "Autobiography and the Cultural Moment: A Thematic, Historical, and Bibliographical Introduction," in Olney (ed.), *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 4.

46 Olney makes this point in relation to the discipline of Black Studies, p. 15 .

47 See Gunew, "Migrant Women Writers: Who's on Whose Margins?," *Meanjin*, 42, No. 1 (1983), p. 20 for discussion of discursive conventions of truth-telling.

48 Godard, "The Politics of Representation," p. 193.

49 Gunew, "Migrant Women Writers," p. 17.

50 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Vol.1: An Introduction*, (trans.) Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), p. 27.

51 See also *The History of Sexuality: Vol. 1*, p. 43.

52 My own prevarication is intended to allow both discourse as resistance, and silence as resistance to function side by side, even undecidably within any utterance.

53 Muecke, p. 410.

54 Muecke, p. 410.

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- 55 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Vol. 1*, p. 35.
- 56 Muecke, p. 410.
- 57 Newman, p. 385.
- 58 Newman, p. 385.
- 59 Muecke, p. 412.
- 60 Barry J. Mandel, "Full of Life Now," in Olney (ed.), p. 53.
- 61 Mandel, p. 55. Despite its similarities to fiction in being a 'story', Mandel argues that autobiography is *not* fiction.
- 62 Estelle C. Jelinek, in Jelinek (ed.), p. 17.
- 63 Jelinek, p. 17.
- 64 Mason, p. 231.
- 65 Margaret Miller, p. 23.
- 66 Noel Chabani Manganyi, "Psychobiography and the Truth of the Subject," *biography*, 6, No. 1 (1983), p. 38.
- 67 Manganyi, p. 38.
- 68 Gunnars, p. 151.
- 69 Newman, p. 383.
- 70 Gunnars, p. 151.
- 71 Kateryna Olijnyk Arthur, "Beyond Orality: Canada and Australia," in *Ariel*, 21. No. 3 (1990), p. 25.
- 72 R. Victoria Arana, "The Psychoaesthetics of Autobiography," *biography*, 6, No. 1 (1983), p. 59.
- 73 Arana, p. 54.
- 74 Arana p. 55.
- 75 Manganyi, p. 37.
- 76 Manganyi, p. 37.
- 77 Georges Gusdorf, "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography," (trans. James Olney), in Olney (ed.), p. 42.
- 78 See, for example, *My Place*, p. 161.
- 79 Manganyi, p. 38.

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- 80 Gusdorf, p. 32.
- 81 Roger Rosenblatt, "Black Autobiography: Life as the Death Weapon," in Olney (ed.), p. 178.
- 82 Gunnars, p. 151.
- 83 Manganyi, p. 40; citing Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, p. 7.
- 84 Muecke, p. 413.
- 85 Biddy Martin, "Feminism, Criticism, and Foucault," in Diamond and Quinby (eds), p. 9.
- 86 Hulme pointed out in an interview that Kerewin, who is fluent with words, doesn't touch. See Shona Smith, "Constructing the Author: An Interview with Keri Hulme," *Untold*, 4 (1985), p. 28.
- 87 Hulme told Smith in the same interview, "You know what breath is to Maori -- you are your breath. One of the reasons for the hongi is that you are sharing the breath that we all share," p. 29.
- 88 Another reading which transcends this individual focus is Mita's reading of the violence as allegorical of the violence that pervades New Zealand society. See Merata Mita, "Indigenous Literature in a Colonial Society," *The Republican*, 52 (1984), p. 5
- 89 See also Dale, pp. 418-9.
- 90 See also *The Bone People*, p. 120 for another example of emotional self-contradiction and struggle.
- 91 See Dale, p. 420; Shona Smith, "Keri Hulme: Breaking Ground", in *Untold*, 2 (1984), p. 45; and Mita, p. 5.
- 92 This will be discussed in more detail in relation to the specifically Maori terms of 'redemption'.
- 93 In *Leaving the Highway*, p. 102, Williams has noted the irony of the use of imperialist diction in this passage, an observation which relates to the redemptive element of the novel's discourse.
- 94 Varying versions are possible across time, or specific to locality or tribal heritage; however one is usually confined to one's own inherited version.
- 95 Mita, p. 6.
- 96 C. K. Stead, "Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* and the Pegasus Award for Maori Literature," *Ariel*, 16, No. 4 (1985), p. 107.
- 97 Stead, p. 104.
- 98 Williams, *Leaving the Highway*, p. 100.
- 99 Williams, *Leaving the Highway*, p. 99.
- 100 Williams, *Leaving the Highway*, p. 100.



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- 101 Dale, p. 420.
- 102 Dale, p. 420.
- 103 See Dale, note 13, pp. 427-8.
- 104 Fee, "Who can write as Other?" p. 19.
- 105 Fee, "Who Can Write as Other?" p. 18.
- 106 Williams, *Leaving the Highway*, p. 100.
- 107 Allan Hanson, "The Making of the Maori: Culture Invention and its Logic," *American Anthropologist*, 91, No. 4 (1989), p. 897.
- 108 Hanson, p. 897.
- 109 See Elizabeth Webby, "Keri Hulme: Spiralling to Success," *Meanjin*, 44, No. 1 (1985), pp. 17-20.
- 110 Stead, p. 106.
- 111 Williams, *Leaving the Highway*, p. 89.
- 112 Williams, *Leaving the Highway*, p. 97.
- 113 Williams, *Leaving the Highway*, p. 107.
- 114 Williams, *Leaving the Highway*, p. 86.
- 115 Fleur Adcock, "Simon's War," *New Society*, 73, No. 1176 (12 July, 1985), p. 61; cited. in Dale, p. 417.
- 116 Dale, p. 417.
- 117 Williams, *Leaving the Highway*, p. 88-9.
- 118 Williams, *Leaving the Highway*, p. 87.
- 119 Smith, "Constructing the Author," p. 30.

## SECTION III

### IN(CON)CLUSION

## CHAPTER SIX.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE BODY/OF THE TEXT.

## 6. I. (Re)Introduction.

Chapter Six constitutes both a return to the body of the thesis, and a return of the body to the thesis. In turning the 'gaze' of my discussion back upon itself, I recognise, however, that such a re-turn is not the regaining of the original. Instead, I re-read the thesis through the opacity of itself, each part 'contaminated' by all the others. Thus it neither begins nor ends with a concluding metadiscourse which claims transparency to the 'original' text, offering the closure of mimesis, and representation where the part is already the whole -- the 'essential' argument. Instead there is the further elaboration of a problematic of post-colonial discourse and subjectivity which has gradually been demonstrated in preceding chapters -- that is, hybridity. While the last chapter concluded with a discussion of the hybridity of post-colonial discourses and the hybrid subject-positions they produce, the introduction in this chapter of Bhabha's analysis of colonial hybridity serves to specify this as a condition which has been implicit in much of the discussion of post-colonial discourses and texts in the thesis. Bhabha's analysis therefore provides a certain mirror on the thesis, while *this* text provides a multifaceted mirror on Bhabha's. It enacts, for instance, the return of the image of the (phallogentric) production of sexual difference as the 'silent support' of (post-)colonial subjective differentiation. Further, the implications of phallogentric sexual differentiation for post-colonial subjectivity and discourse, and for cultural production and critique (theorising), are explored, demonstrating their culmination in the continual necessity of abstracting the subject from the body. However, failures of abstraction result in the abjection of the (phallogentric) subject, and signal the return of the body, a return whose insistence points to the radical strategy of bodily '*con*-tamination' of discourse and subjectivity as the basis of post-colonial cultural production. As it is specifically the maternal/female body which is excluded from paternal/Symbolic Law, this chapter must function both as the reintroduction of the body of the thesis -- preventing the phallogentrism of metadiscourse -- and of the *sexed* body to the thesis -- keeping open the possibilities of dialogue and exchange. It is the materiality of the body (of text) which is privileged.

This Section functions to acknowledge the academically sanctioned habit of 'conclusion', so that its position within the thesis is 'in conclusion'. However it attempts to subvert such closure within its own structure and by including a final chapter whose status is the ambivalent one of supplement, so that it embodies 'inconclusion'. The Section argues and enacts the necessity for the return of the body, and specifically the maternally-connoted body to the orders of language and subjectivity, the inclusion of the maternal body and the possibility of sexual difference rendered as in(*con*)clusion. Further, the 'con' is bracketed to suggest precisely the specificities of sexual difference, resisting the phallogentric order of the Same which in its Symbolic order contains the feminine as a reflection of itself.

## 6. II. The Problematic of Hybridity.

Much of this thesis has concerned the hybridity of post-colonial discourses: I have tried to show resistant discourses which paradoxically conform to the desire of the dominant discourse they contest, both assuming and offering, for example, originality, presence, and identity; and similarly dominant discourses have been shown to appropriate the image of 'original presence' identified with indigenous populations, women, and the working class, through their putative closeness to the land, to natural origins, even to pre-urban and pre-industrial 'traditional' cultures. Nevertheless, the appropriation of the content and even position of contestatory discourses by the subjects of the dominant discourses necessarily implies their insertion into the economy of exchange(-ability) which characterises the social Symbolic. In other words, their Imaginary 'difference' is inserted into and articulated by the Symbolic order of the (valorised) Same. The demands of contestatory discourses -- for rights, representation, identity -- conform to, or *mirror*, the ethical, legal, theological precepts of the very discourses they oppose. Therefore, discourses of resistance cannot be understood as radically Other: indeed their oppositional status names their relational construction, while their relational status points to their position on some shared boundary between discourses where their agonism is played out. If it were radically Other-wise, the dominant discourse, or discursive structures would remain untouched, intact: the Other discourse would neither be resistant nor contestatory nor oppositional. In short, the ideal of pure alterity would

achieve nothing in its non-relational status, while resistant discourses must contend with the difference-from-themselves that is hybridity.

Chapter Five, for example, concluded with a discussion of the hybridity of post-colonial discourses in *The Bone People*. It was discovered in the linguistic alienation of Joe, whose 'Maoriness' is alienated, yet marked, in the bitterness of his use of English, and in Kerewin, whose 'Maoriness' is alienated in trivial word-play; *and* in the fact that both Kerewin and Joe acknowledge the loss of their 'Maoriness', a loss whose supposedly original 'presence' was projected as the effect of loss itself. As Bhabha observes, "the difference of cultures can no longer be identified or evaluated as objects of epistemological or moral contemplation: they are not simply *there* to be seen or appropriated."<sup>1</sup> Further, hybridity is the condition of the cultural self-consciousness of Tiaki, who recognises his people as mere 'husks', aping European manners and customs, and of Joe, for whom awareness of cultural *difference* precludes the plenitude of continuity with a 'Maori' cultural past. Yet

[t]o see the cultural not as the *source* of conflict -- *different* cultures -- but as the *effect* of discriminatory practices -- the production of cultural *differentiation* as signs of authority -- changes its value and its rules of recognition. What is preserved is the visible surfaces of its artefacts -- the mere *visibility* of the symbol, as a fleeting immediacy.<sup>2</sup>

Even the construction of a post-colonial identity must therefore be understood as such an artefact of hybrid cultural production, an artefact of the (positive/productive and negative/exclusive) discriminatory gaze. In this way, Joe is marked by appearance as 'Maori', despite feeling alienated from traditional and spiritual facets of Maori identity, and Kerewin, who 'feels' Maori, but does not 'appear' so, must assert this identity in response to a sceptical discriminatory gaze. It was argued that *The Bone People* posits a strategy of self-conscious essentialism in which 'Maori' values are privileged within the organically-inspired social ideal of 'commensalism'. As self-conscious essentialism, it is a contradictory strategy -- or strategic contradiction -- and yet as *resistance* there is arguably no other ground available in post-colonial space than that of hybridity. Therefore, despite Benita Parry's criticism of the "deconstructive" analytical practices of Bhabha (and Spivak), which claims that they "act to constrain the development of an anti-imperialist critique,"<sup>3</sup> it is more useful to acknowledge their problematisation of positivist discourses which

disavow precisely their oppositional, and thus their relational, deferred, displaced, status. This problematisation of positivism does not preclude efficacy in anti-imperialist critique. Bhabha argues that hybridity "reveals the ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority and enables a form of subversion, founded on that uncertainty that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention."<sup>4</sup> However, to move beyond the circumscriptions of such strategy requires the analysis and dismantling of the terms of encounter out of which hybridity occurs -- a kind of rewriting of history, or more precisely, historicity.<sup>5</sup>

Hybridity must not be understood as in any sense a resolution of terms of cultural difference, a synthesis which transcends the dialectical pairing of thesis and antithesis, thereby establishing a new colonial -- post-colonial -- positivity of culture or identity. Rather than "a problem of genealogy or identity between two *different* cultures . . . . [h]ybridity is a *problematic* of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of colonialist disavowal so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority."<sup>6</sup> The agonistic relations between these terms of Self and Otherness, admitted and disavowed knowledges, are kept in play as definitive of hybridisation. They emerge, for example, in settler post-colonial discourses of bi-culturalism (New Zealand) and of multi-culturalism (Australia, Canada). Neither refers to a 'melt-down' of cultural difference, nor to a meeting of original and pure cultures, but rather to a negotiation of hybrid (op)positionalities whose strength lies in their relational location along shifting but discursively impermeable boundaries. This point will be developed further through the chapter.

Bhabha's analysis is related specifically to the colonial encounter; however, its terms are clearly important for consideration of post-colonial cultures and discourses. It defines the fundamental structuring of relations which in turn determine the content of their cultural 'artefacts'. Similarly, colonisation itself, although frequently referred to here as an 'encounter', must not be understood as a discrete 'event'. There is no moment at which a land or people are 'colonised', and a new, 'colonial' society set in place. The encounter is in the form of relations which, as discussion in Chapters Two and Three illustrated (through post-colonial texts which posit the indigenous relation to the land as subject to persistent

colonisation) are maintained through the structural inequalities and processes of discrimination. In addition, Stephen Slemon refers to post-colonialism's retention of "a specifically anti-colonial discursive energy . . . which emerges *not* from the inherent cultural contradiction that necessarily marks transplanted settler societies but rather from their continuing yet subterranean tradition of refusal towards the conceptual and cultural apparatuses of the European imperium."<sup>7</sup> However, despite the invaluable terms of Bhabha's analysis, they are extended here to take account of the advent of Nation in Britain's white-settler colonies, and of Nation as informing and indeed 'motivating', or driving, the symptomatic (of prior repression), hybrid post-colonial discourses of contestation.

The dismantling of the terms of the settler-colonial encounter may begin with a return to the argument of Chapter One, which took as its beginning the advent of Nation as analogous to the erection of the monolithic 'Self'. A colonial-cultural 'mirror-stage' was posited, so that whereas colonial hybridity -- the particular self-other relation of *différance* constituted by the colonial encounter -- is founded upon the disavowal of the productivity of that encounter, or the functioning of the mirror as anything other than mimetic, Nation is constituted through a process of repression of colonialism's already hybrid objects.<sup>8</sup> The construction of Nationhood is differentiated from the colonial relation in that colonial authority is *explicitly* founded upon its identification as a metonym of Empire, and colonial identity as legitimised through its metonymic status as British, disavowing its already displaced, hybrid status, while Nation disavows Britain as the source of authority, even if Britain provides terms fundamental to its dominant cultural assumptions. Further, Nation disavows the imperial relations which structure it and lend it its authority. Instead, the Nation claims to name itself as 'Self', emphasising identity within itself -- presence -- rather than difference from Britain or Empire, let alone similarity to these. It is these disavowals which will be shown to return as a threat to Nation's putative autonomy. Nationalism can be understood as that political drive toward the instigation of body-separateness from the Imperial (M)Other, and which proffers the image of body-unity. Nation therefore stands alone and apparently autonomous, not as English, but as the form(ul)ation of 'Australia' or 'Canada' or 'New Zealand'.

To understand the power of Nation's appearance of presence-to-itself, the appearance which underlies and guarantees its authority, it is helpful to see it as the product of a 'mirror' encounter. Chapter One explained the ambivalence of the passage of the mirror-stage: primary narcissism directs the infant's positive investment in wholeness and unity, and by extension, the narcissistic drive is posited as the morphology for preoccupation with (*images of*) *national* identity. Literature functions as an important 'mirror' in the production of these images. However, the mirror encounter also instigates a *relational* sense of self, and identity -- also a relational construct -- is attained only at the cost of presence to the self, or plenitude. It is this plenitude which is sacrificed in the attainment of the whole and unique, or autonomous, body-image by way of the production of discriminations, their objects relegated to the status of the not-Self, and repressed. It is the not-Self which would compromise the image of wholeness and autonomy. Produced by the mirror encounter in the Imaginary, the not-Self is structured by, and returns through, that same Imaginary, to be accorded the status of discriminated *identities*, stereotypes of the Imaginary -- Nation's Others. In short, the 'identities' of Others owe more to the structure of the Imaginary than to any anterior, alterior presence. This initially alarming insight into the ontology of resistant subjects and discourses does, nevertheless, point to a more radical site of intervention into colonising power relations, as will be shown.

As the mirror stage determines that the (sense of) self is separated from the image of the (ideal) self, a process which is the precursor to castration in and by language, an ambivalent mix of loss and compensation is set in place. As has been stated, in exchange for presence the subject attains identity, and this enables participation in the Symbolic order through the 'I' whose articulation will effect a suture of the separation of self and image, or signified and signifier. While narcissism is accompanied by a primary aggression, characterising relations of exchange, substitution, and representation, these terms are essential to the Symbolic order, the order of representations: 'I' for self; identity for presence; and image for corporeality. However, the suture is never entirely successful. There is always a residual lack or absence in language which both founds desire, and ensures the subject's traversal of an endless chain of signifiers, eluded by fullness and by closure. These absences in language constitute the vulnerability of the subject's place in the Symbolic. Further, this account must be extended (and ultimately fractured) by the recognition of the



double alienation of the female 'subject' who is either alienated *from* more than *in* the Symbolic ('normal femininity'), or doubly alienated from herself *by* it ('masculinity complex'). In other words, while language calls the masculine subject into being, it is language which renders the 'feminine subject' an impossible contradiction.

If the image replaces corporeality -- absence replaces presence -- it is necessary to look at the inducements to privilege a place within the Law which articulates -- even masters -- the subject, over the *jouissance* of the body. This re-siting of privilege is once again a function of the mirror stage. The encounter with the mirror raises the threat of 'castration', a threat associated with access to the mother's body, access which 'occurred' in uninterrupted plenitude in the pre-Imaginary. The mirror image confronts the infant with the absence or lack of/in the mother, concomitant with its own 'wholeness' and 'autonomy'. While celebratory of that wholeness and autonomy, the Imaginary infant perceives that the 'castration' of the mother threatens it with its own castration (the recognition of its existence as the product of separation). Therefore the narcissistic investment in bodily integrity directs the infant's identification (the position offered the boy) and desire (the position offered the girl) to the privileges of subjectivity and legitimacy offered by the Law, the Name/No of the Father. To identify with the mother, or to retain her desire, would confront the infant with the threat of castration, because in the Imaginary the mother is perceived (imagined) as castrated, whereas the Father has the Phallus.

Thus we return to the determinate power of the mirror and its productivity. In his analysis of the colonial encounter, Bhabha has warned against underestimating the importance of the surface appearance projected through the mirror image:

The power play of presence is lost if its transparency is treated naïvely as the nostalgia for plenitude that should be flung repeatedly into the abyss -- *mis en abîme* -- from which its desire is born. . . . For it is this *surface* that stabilizes the agonistic colonial space; it is its *appearance* that regulates the ambivalence between origin and *Entstellung*, discipline and desire, mimesis and repetition.<sup>9</sup>

It is this same power play of presence which stabilises the authority of Nation, casting it as transparent to its 'self' -- Nation as the articulation of a structured surface, or image. To refer to surfaces in this manner should

not be understood as implying their 'falsity', nor that 'truth' resides, in its integrity, in the depths beneath. The Imaginary order ensures that there is only a play of surfaces, and that in this depthlessness there can be no *reversal* of positions which would be truer to origins or presence. Therefore, what is repressed in the formation of Nation, the content of its 'unconscious', is not natural presences, but already hybrid objects, discriminated and constituted as identity-effects in that Imaginary encounter. What is disavowed is the process of the construction of these 'identities', and their hybrid status. It is now possible to see the authority of Nation as the articulation of a structured surface, an image which represents, and is held to be representative of, Nation.

In Chapter One I argued that the constructions of images of national identity in Australia, Canada and New Zealand have their basis in some form of 'representation'. It was shown that images of national 'distinctiveness' emphasised national 'autonomy', so that the representation *was* the image, and the image already the 'whole'. Images of national 'typicality' invoked the representation of metonymy, where the 'part' does not fill, but stands for, the 'whole'. Finally, images of identification with the 'valorised exception' constituted representation in which the part was erected on the basis of its privileged right to 'speak for' the whole. Images of national identity were argued to concern the representation of a Self, as the construct of Nation involved the repression of (its) Others. However, in Chapters Four and Five I considered the more complex politics of representation in the subjective and discursive territorialisation of post-colonial contestations of that Nation-Self. The issue became one of both the representation of the Self and the re(-)presentation of the Other, the result of the return of Nation's repressed Others from its 'unconscious', and demanding re-representation. Indeed, the questions, problematisations and demands which destabilise the smooth surface of Nation's authority, disrupting the transparency of that authority, are posed from the post-colonised discursive space (which must now be understood as the hybrid space of Nation's mirror reflection). This is emphatically *not* to argue that the post-colonised represent the only true post-colonial subjectivity, as has been suggested by Mark Williams, for example, who claims that "Post-colonialism speaks on behalf of those dispossessed by empire and struggling in its wake to reconstitute, or constitute anew, their identities."<sup>10</sup> 'Post-colonialism' does not speak such a unified subject. While this is a mode of post-colonial discourse, it would

be misleading to understand it in these limited terms alone. It is with this understanding that Williams can go on to ask "are Breyten Bretenbach or J.M. Coetzee post-colonial writers because they write against a colonizing power or are they disqualified because both belong to the oppressing racial group that still benefits from colonization?"<sup>11</sup> I argue that such searching for unified terms of definitive (and autonomous) identity elides the very issues of complex positionality generated by the post-colonial condition. In a similar vein, but more prescriptively than Williams, Linda Hutcheon has argued that "when Canadian culture is called post-colonial today the reference is very rarely to the Native culture, which might be the more accurate use of the term. . . . Native and Métis writers are today demanding a voice . . . and perhaps, given their articulations of the damage to Indian culture and people done by the colonizers . . . and the process of colonization, theirs should be considered the resisting post-colonial voice of Canada."<sup>12</sup> Post-colonial subjectivity embraces both post-coloniser and post-colonised in the mutual (even if not equal) loss of originality and authenticity, and the interrogation of cultural codes and bases of authority. If the post-colonised position is that *from which* the question of National authority is posed, the question already inheres within Nation, within its disturbed authority. Therefore, just as the discussion of the representation of Nation included 'representation' in the politico-administrative sense and in the (also political) sense of the construction of identity-images, these two meanings, which can be aligned with the Symbolic and the Imaginary orders respectively, are negotiated in post-colonial questions of *hybrid* representation.

Nation's claim to represent its Self is contested by the exposure, in post-colonialism, of the necessary basis of its power in the representation of, or the more clearly aggressive *substitution* for, the Other. Questions raised in Chapter Four of the 'dominant' representation of 'marginal' Others included both the concern with the Imaginary -- the production of (both positive and negative) *images* of the Other -- and with Symbolic questions of subjectivity -- not *how* the Other should be represented, but by whom. The violence of representation was identified as being less in the nature of images, than located in the arrogation to the dominant National Self of subjective privilege, the right to speak for and about the Other; in other words, in the Symbolic nature of representation. Post-colonial contestatory discourses therefore argue the political necessity of refusal to 'colonise' the discursive space of the Other-Self, and that one must specify

one's credentials to speak by specifying the 'fit' of (Imaginary) identity and (Symbolic) subject-position. They therefore posit the territorialisation of discursive space as a counter-strategy against the political or discursive colonisation or appropriation, a move which actually *reflects* the dominant notions of subjectivity, identity, and transgression which named them Other and policed the boundaries of authorised discourse. Further, the only means of defence of 'their own' discursive territory is the weapon of identity, that which recognises them in the field of the Other. Thus they are more or less imprisoned in the discursive space proffered by the dominant discourse, but because identity substitutes for presence, it must also be recognised that *they* are not *there*; and 'they' *are* not, there.

Like National strategies of self-representation, post-colonial privileging of the representation of the Self not only negotiates the Imaginary sense of representation as image and the Symbolic sense of substitution-subjectivity, but merges them into a parallel conflation of identity and truth or knowledge: the possibility of 'true' representations produced by 'identities' which guarantee, and are reflected in, subject-positions. However, as Gayatri Spivak has argued, this "cannot be held as a theoretical presupposition. . . . [K]nowledge is made possible and is sustained by irreducible difference, not identity. What is known is always in excess of knowledge. Knowledge is never adequate to its object."<sup>13</sup> The essentialist assumption of adequacy, which is also that of truth to identity and identity to truth, relies on the same mirror-relation and the same mirror *morphology* which underlies the determination of colonial positionality and of 'national identity'. It is the mirror of mimesis, where self and image are held to be entirely coterminous. It overlooks the production of the image out of difference, and the location of the image in the inaccessible field of the Other, returned to the Self only by way of the phallus. The phallus stands for the logic of substitution and representation, not presence; it is that which signifies the repression of difference (the difference-in-being), while ensuring that identity is both not Self, and not not-Self.

However, returning to -- or still within -- the as yet inescapable power of the Imaginary, it is necessary to acknowledge the implications of a politicised Imaginary, that images are political, and that they embody a form of violence, whether they are 'negative' or 'positive'. The question is not one of the ability or *right* to *circulate* images, with the assumption

that self-representation will be 'positive', let alone 'true'; nor is it *solely* the issue of the violence which inheres in all representations or images as substitutions (whether ontological or epistemological). It is, further, that the structuring of the Imaginary order itself is political, in that it is not 'human' or 'universal', but rather 'masculine' and 'Western'. In eliding these specificities, however, it speaks of the 'human' and the 'universal'. This is a political issue of representation and a political act of silencing or suppression. Masculine, Western self-representation submits to the violence of all representations (within phallogentrism); however within this order, even positive (self-)images produced by or for those positioned as Other will be *further* contained as reflections or negatives of the valorised, phallogentric Self. In other words, there is a *specific* politics, or a politics of specificity, informing the very structuring of the Imaginary, and it is this which must be addressed.

Post-colonial discourses which disavow their status as hybrid products of the colonial encounter, repressed into the 'unconscious' of Nation and returning through the National Imaginary, and instead privilege their own claims to identity, can be argued to be at least partially complicit in the process by which they are reappropriated by the dominant discourse. Their focus on Imaginary identity is flattering to the narcissism of Nation -- indeed they arguably become fetishised by Nation. True alterity cannot be found(ed) in a reversal of the mirror gaze, because the mirror itself is no natural or innocent medium. It is a technology specific to the production of certain -- dominant -- cultural effects. It is therefore necessary to heed Bhabha's identification of "the *need*, in our contemporary moment, to contest singularities of difference and to articulate modes of differentiation."<sup>14</sup>

**6. II. (i). The Hybridity of 'Hybridity': The Mirror Speaks Back.** Ironically, the articulation of modes of differentiation may begin with the revelation of the terms upon which Bhabha's own analysis of colonial differentiation, discrimination, and authority are founded. It can be suggested that his own discourse is the (hybrid) product of an encounter with the mirror of sexual differentiation; its terms pervade Bhabha's analysis but the productivity of the encounter is, at this point, disavowed.<sup>15</sup> The Lacanian analysis of sexual difference is 'invisible', but is the condition of visibility of his own argument. Thus colonial difference can be understood as the product, or even the hybrid of sexual difference. It is

therefore this debt which must now be acknowledged. In bringing this encounter from 'disavowal' to light, it is also possible to demonstrate the hybridity of sexual difference -- its non-present, non-essential *différance*, its terms as the product(ivity) of (a specific) Imaginary structuring, and its articulation through a socio-Symbolic order which legitimises that Imaginary. It is also this destabilisation of the transparency of its authority that will allow it to be recognised as a powerful, and therefore 'true', reflection of currently existing modes of sexual differentiation, and by analogy cultural differentiation in colonial through to post-colonial discourses of identity-in-resistance, but which at the same time identifies the ground of its own deconstruction. Specifically, it will be shown that 'sexual difference' is not difference after all, but rather contained in a binary logic of presence and absence. 'Sexual difference' does not underlie sexual relations as articulated in the social Symbolic, but is produced within the logic of the Imaginary encounter itself. What follows is a mirror encounter of passages from Bhabha's analysis of racial/cultural difference in his "Signs Taken for Wonders," and its reflection of the process of sexual difference.

## Hybridity Before the Mirror of Sexual Difference.

"What is 'English' in . . . discourses of colonial power cannot be represented as a plenitude or a 'full' presence; it is determined by its belatedness. As a signifier of authority, the English book acquires its meaning *after* the traumatic scenario of colonial difference, cultural or racial, returns the eye of power to some prior, archaic image or identity. Paradoxically, however, such an image can neither be 'original' -- by virtue of the act of repetition that constructs it -- nor 'identical' -- by virtue of the difference that defines it. Consequently, the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference. It is this ambivalence that makes the boundaries of colonial 'positionality' -- the division of self/other -- and the question of colonial power -- the differentiation of colonizer/colonized -- different from both the Hegelian master/slave dialectic or the phenomenological projection of Otherness. It is a *différance* produced within the act of enunciation as a specifically colonial articulation of these two disproportionate sites of colonial discourse and power: the colonial scene as the invention of historicity, mastery, mimesis, or as the 'other scene' of *Entstellung*, displacement, fantasy, psychic defence, and an 'open' textuality. Such a dis-play of difference produces a mode of authority that is agonistic (rather than antagonistic)".

What is 'masculine' in discourses of phallocentrism cannot be represented as a plenitude or a 'full' presence; it is determined by its belatedness. As a signifier of authority, the Phallus acquires its meaning (value) *after* the traumatic scenario of sexual difference which institutes the narcissistic gaze and its disavowal of castration. However the image produced by the narcissistic gaze can neither be 'original' -- by virtue of the act of repetition (in the field of the Other) that constructs it -- not 'identical' -- by virtue of the difference (of 'self' and 'image') that defines it. Consequently, the masculine presence of phallocentrism is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference. It is this ambivalence that makes the boundaries of sexual 'positionality' -- the division of masculine/feminine -- and the question of patriarchal power -- the differentiation of men/women -- different from both the Hegelian master/slave dialectic or the phenomenological projection of Otherness. It is a *différance* produced within the act of enunciation as a specifically sexual articulation of these two disproportionate sites of sexual discourse and power: the mirror encounter as the invention of phallocentric historicity, mastery, mimesis, or as the 'other scene' of *Entstellung*, displacement, fantasy, psychic defence, and an 'open' textuality. Such a dis-play of difference produces a mode of authority that is agonistic (rather than antagonistic).

"Despite appearances, the text of transparency inscribes a double vision: the field of the 'true' emerges as a visible effect of knowledge/power only after the regulatory and displacing division of the true and the false. From this point of view, discursive 'transparency' is best read in the photographic sense in which a transparency is also always a negative, processed into visibility. . . , not a source but a re-source of light. Such a bringing to light is never a prevision; it is always the question of the provision of visibility as a capacity, a strategy, an agency but also in the sense in which the prefix pro(vision) might indicate an elision of sight, delegation, substitution, contiguity, in place of . . . what?"

Despite appearances, the visibility of the Phallus (signification, truth, identity) inscribes a double vision: the Phallus emerges as the visibility of knowledge/power only after the possibility of its loss or absence (in the castrated or split subject). Therefore it is not originally there, followed by its perception and valuation, but is produced out of its differentiation from lack/absence. It is the product of the power of the mirror to reflect the 'light' of the phallic gaze on to 'it'. From this point of view, the phallogocentric 'transparency' (of authority) is best read in the photographic sense in which a transparency is also always a negative, processed into visibility: in which the feminine is the negative out of which masculine positivity is produced. Such a bringing to light of the masculine subject -- and his privileged relation to the Phallus -- is never a prevision; it is always a question of the provision of visibility as a capacity, a strategy, an agency but also in the sense in which the prefix pro(vision) might indicate an elision of sight, delegation, substitution, contiguity, in place of what? The feminine -- invisible but the condition of visibility.

"The exercise of colonialist authority, however, requires the production of differentiations, individuations, identity-effects through which discriminatory practices can map out subject populations that are tarred with the visible and transparent mark of power. . . . Colonial authority requires modes of discrimination . . . that disallow a stable unitary assumption of collectivity. The 'part' (which must be the colonialist foreign body) must be representative of the 'whole' (conquered country), but the right of representation is based on its radical difference".

The exercise patriarchal authority . . . requires the production of sexual differentiations, individuations, identity-effects through which the discriminatory gaze can map out subject populations that are scarred with the visible mark of castration. . . . Patriarchal authority requires modes of discrimination that disallow a stable unitary assumption of collectivity or wholeness. The 'part' (which must be the Phallus) must be representative of the 'hole' (the castrated feminine), but the right of representation is based on the logic which produces phallic positivity.



6. II. (ii). Colonisation and Sexual Difference: Where the Part Represents the (W)hole. From the moment of the mirror encounter and the instigation of the Imaginary order, it becomes impossible to speak of 'male' and 'female' as natural presences (and of course before this, they are undifferentiated). The Imaginary order of *images* makes available to consciousness only the *disembodied* 'idea(l)', while the Symbolic order articulates *values*. Even 'man' and 'woman' constitute Symbolic articulations of Imaginary identities. Thus the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' are used in relation to Imaginary identities to emphasise both their status as 'idea(l)s' and their socio-cultural construction. The corollary, of course, for racial or cultural 'identity' following the colonial encounter is that the terms of such identities do not *re-present* natural or original presences, but the Symbolic articulation of Imaginary identities. Therefore the notion, in Chapters Four and Five, of embodied subject-positions may now be more precisely understood as subject-positions inhabited by Imaginary bodies. This is in no way to diminish the real effects of power in relation to these bodies; colonial and/or patriarchal power produced them, and power contains and controls them, through the stereotypical conflation of 'being' and image, whereas the 'self' is always also elsewhere, and excessive.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, the mirror encounter structures the differentiation of masculine and feminine in a symbiotic relation. Thus they are non-identical -- absent -- identities. However, the work of feminist theorist Luce Irigaray has exposed the already gendered hierarchisation of the masculine and feminine, not through a critique of the empirical basis of 'truth' or 'falsity' of images of the masculine and feminine, but through an analysis of the morphology of the mirror itself. Irigaray's contestation reaches back to Freud's account of the entry into subjectivity predicated on the process of oedipalisation which, she points out, casts the feminine not as a positive term, but as the negative reflection of masculine positivity, guaranteeing its presence. Subjectivity consists of variations on one model, which will also be the model of one-ness. Femininity is constituted as dependence in relation to a *phallic* economy of sameness and identity, as determined by the definitive *model*.<sup>17</sup> 'Phallocentrism' names the use of one model and the definition of others in relation to it, the phallus being understood as the key or threshold signifier which divides the sexes into oppositional relation, separated by a bar, isomorphic

with the erection of a unity of being: the 1, the I. However, the term 'phallus' also points to the rationalisation of identity with reference to biology, itself also necessarily a socio-cultural construction which *produces* sex (or race). 'Phallus' (signifier), according to the logic of this construction, is conflated with 'penis' (organ), providing males with a privileged relation to subjectivity and the process of signification. Thus the attempt to recuperate the function of the phallus by freeing it from linguistic conflation with the penis (and presumably rendering it more palatable to feminism) would be misguided. The conflation points to the need to refuse the phallus, so that the penis (masculinity) both *loses* its privilege and *regains* its pleasure.<sup>18</sup> The logic of phallic privilege is that instigated by Lacan's contribution of his own postulate of the mirror stage to Freud's theory of oedipalisation. The mirror stage indicates the specular economy of 'visibility' conditioning the entry into subjectivity and the relative positioning of 'the sexes' in relation to the phallus/penis. However, Irigaray's analysis points to the specificity, or non-innocence, of this mirror. Her view (through rather than into, or even *from* the mirror) is summarised by Grosz:

Lacan's model of the genesis of the ego provides not a universal or human phenomenon, one preceding sexual difference; for [Irigaray], the mirror reflects only an image placed in front of it: the (implicitly) masculine being. The specular relation is thus composed of man and his self-reflecting other, an image of himself that he takes to be his other, woman. The speculative mirror in which *his* world, his experiences, his position(s) are projected onto the other must be traversed in order to clear a space for women's self-representations, for women to become the subjects looking.<sup>19</sup>

The difference of Irigaray's aim from merely reversing given masculine and feminine subject positions in relation to the same mirror-morphology is explicated in later discussion. The conflation of penis and phallus, and their construction into visibility -- the 'fact' that the penis is perceived as the organ of male sexuality, and that it is the phallus -- constructs masculinity as active, and femininity as the passive object of the gaze, a gaze which necessarily defines them as castrated, as *lack*. Grosz explains:

The phallus and penis can only be aligned if there are those who lack it. It is assumed only on the basis of division and dichotomy, represented by the lack attributed to women. The penis can only enhance one's narcissism if it is somehow distinguished from other organs and parts of the body. It enhances men's narcissism because it constitutes their corporeal unity in relation to women's

incompleteness. The penis comes to represent tangibly the differences between the sexes as other organs, in our culture, do not, enabling it to function on an imaginary level to signify presence and absence or fullness and privation.<sup>20</sup>

The masculine subject is therefore assured that he 'has' what woman 'lacks' and thus desires. The phallus, as the term of exchange between them, functions as an emblem of language -- the third term which fractures the Imaginary dyad. Patriarchal socio-symbolic relations mirror phallogocentric subjectivity; language and social relations are a product of the mirror of "dichotomous structures of knowledge, the binary polarisations in which only man's primacy is reflected."<sup>21</sup> They are characterised by a specific singularity and monologism under the illusion of transparent reflections of the universal. Further, the masculine subject is isomorphic with the Western subject of colonialism and (post-)colonial Nationalism. As Irigaray argues, "all Western discourse presents a certain isomorphism with the masculine sex: the privilege of unity, form of the self, of the visible, of the specularisable, of the erection (which is the becoming in a form)."<sup>22</sup>

The mirror structure which abstracts the subject from the body, necessitates that phallogocentric self-reflection (self-knowledge, metadiscourse, theory) be a product of self-distance, the mediated relationship between terms on either side of -- therefore separated or distanced by -- the flat mirror of reflection or mimesis: "the near side, the empirical realm that is opaque of all language" and "the far side, the self-sufficient infinite of the God of men."<sup>23</sup> That the positions are essentially irreversible and irreducible points to the logic which underlies patriarchy. The position of (male) dominance is founded on self-distance, the privileging of the ideal phallic image over the materiality of the body and its excess, including the 'excessiveness' of its *jouissance*. The earlier reference to the social construction of biology and sexuality can now be understood further in terms of the function of phallogocentrism in arresting or solidifying, rather than expressing male sexuality. Irigaray argues that "to place genitality in a privileged position amounts in fact to according a privileged status to the values which unify, but also the values of production, the values of 'making', and with the aim of bringing to light something visible and which would be the proof of the efficiency of 'making' -- in this case the child."<sup>24</sup> She points out that the "teleological model is . . . possible for a man -- even if he thus loses pleasure,"<sup>25</sup> and asks

why, for example, "such little emphasis has been placed on the fluidity of the sperm"<sup>26</sup> rather than the solidity of its 'product', a possibility which could profoundly alter the representation of male sexuality. If it should seem curious that feminist thinkers such as Irigaray (and, for example, Cixous) should focus on the morphology of the male body, male sexuality, and masculine subjectivity, it can be seen as their recognition of the determining role these constructions have played in the possibilities for women's sexuality and subjectivity, and further that "the masculine can speak of and for the feminine largely because it has emptied itself of any relation to the male body, its specificity, and socio-political existence."<sup>27</sup> Therefore, while men stand to regain their polymorphous pleasures, it is also crucial for recognition of women's subjectivity and sexuality as other than that of non-man, that

Men still have everything to say about their sexuality, and everything to write. For what they have said so far, for the most part, stems from the opposition activity/passivity, from the power relation between a fantasized obligatory virility meant to invade, to colonize, and the consequential phantasm of woman as a 'dark continent' to penetrate and to 'pacify'.<sup>28</sup>

### 6. III. Concentricities.

This section addresses three broad areas of challenge to phallocentrism, and its patriarchal cultural manifestations, by the materiality of the (female/maternal) body -- the 'sexual/textual' body. These include (feminist) considerations of the relationships between feminism and other (race, class) struggles against oppression, and between feminism-as-practice and the practice of theory; the attempt in this thesis to subvert some of the features of phallocentric argument through discursive self-touching and a concentric structure, while remaining contained in/by academic prescriptions; and the disruptive return of the (never fully) excluded maternal body as the abjection of the phallocentric subject. All three therefore acknowledge the location of the body *in* phallocentrism, so that "this 'outside the law' [which is the locus of femininity] is always already inside the field of meaning that the Law, the Logos, delimits."<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, it is a politically necessary strategy to place this material/maternal body provisionally at the centre, in order to demonstrate the provisionality, and ultimate impossibility, of the phallic Ideal. Further, post-colonialism itself names the tension between the Law

and its impossibility, its discourses negotiating the materiality of culture and the disembodied Ideal of the Law.

**6. III. (i). Feminism and Post-Colonialism: At the Interface of Theory and Praxis.** In a gesture which can be seen as symptomatic of the power of phallocentrism to determine even contestatory discursive paradigms, it has been argued that "Feminism has not in general provided post-colonial criticism with a model or models because its development has been rather as a coincident and parallel discourse."<sup>30</sup> However, as has been suggested, the very notion of a 'model' is phallic, and it is one which feminism both actively and constitutively problematises. There is, for example, the plurality of *feminisms* which resist the unity implied in the 'model' because they function less as discrete or autonomous alternatives -- in which case they could offer models -- than as analyses, discourses, praxes, that continually refuse their erection into the positive form of a model. However, the question must also be raised of the *desire* that feminism fulfill this function, echoing as it does, the patriarchal demand for feminine perfection and self-display for masculine gratification. Braidotti warns, for example, in relation to the post-modern critique of representation and legitimacy, that "The specificity of the female problematic is implicitly denied by being melted into a sign -- a symptom? - - of masculine preoccupations."<sup>31</sup> She asks, "Why does the subversion or deconstruction of the subject of rationality seem to imply the transition via the 'feminine'?", and suggests that "Feminism . . . stands as the mark of desire for a new way to conduct human affairs, to think about the human being as an entity, as well as being the expression of a political will to achieve justice for women."<sup>32</sup> These concerns for the retention of a specifically *women's* programme of social and political contestation recall similar concerns, discussed in Chapters Three and Four, that the specificity of indigenous contestation not be subsumed in the appropriation of the indigene as the *sign* of cultural authenticity in settler post-colonial cultures. In both cases, the 'place of enunciation', figured in Chapter Four as 'discursive territorialisation', functions as a limiting term on the groundless dissemination of discursive strategies of identification.

However, the strategic value of theoretico-political alliances cannot be discounted; further, the 'autonomy' of political 'movements' is confronted not simply by their implication in the dominant political systems against which they struggle, but also by the multiple

interpellations of subjects of gender, race, class and other discourses and practices. Programmatic specificity need not be sacrificed in certain alliances or commonalities of analysis. However, unless such commonalities are founded on an understanding of the production of subjectivity out of discourses and their institutionalisation, theoretical impasses emerge which ultimately constrain effective social action or political change. There are, for example, feminist analyses predicated on phallogentric and universalising, humanist assumptions. The 'model' approach can be found in some attempts to construct a relationship between feminist analyses of women's oppression and post-colonial analyses of colonial oppressions. However, there is a tendency for such arguments to become caught in the stasis of binary contradiction, between whether the primacy of patriarchal oppression of women provides a model for subsequent/consequent colonial oppression,<sup>33</sup> or whether colonial oppression provides a model for the analysis of women's oppression.<sup>34</sup> In other cases they are seen as two separate instances of oppression, so that women in (post-)colonial space are doubly colonised or oppressed,<sup>35</sup> while this view has been challenged by those who differentiate (post-)colonial space into (post-)coloniser and (post-)colonised subject positions. These commentators maintain that white women, in relation to colonial oppression, are colonisers,<sup>36</sup> or are at most 'half-colonised', while it is indigenous women who bear the double burden of colonial and patriarchal oppression.<sup>37</sup> 'Class' analysis contributes a further dimension, as women are posited, along with 'underdeveloped societies', as "the unseen foundation for the entire social edifice of industrialism," so that "the women's question is related to the colonial question and . . . both are related to the dominant, global capitalist-patriarchal model of accumulation,<sup>38</sup> a perspective which is then vulnerable to the splitting into respective positions of (post-)coloniser and (post-)colonised women.

It would be to disregard Bhabha's warning to denigrate the value of such empirical *descriptions*, as they *reflect*, within the hegemonic apparatus of power, the *presence* of authority, and the authority of presence. Further, the tendency of any such explanatory system to split under the weight of the production of further analytical paradigms, is a valuable indicator of the fundamental inadequacy of any model. However, while the humanist tradition of western consciousness which dominates settler post-colonial space valorises and articulates Imaginary presences, it remains trapped within the reproduction of its own blindness

to the conformity of knowledges to a *specific* rather than universal epistemology. Where feminism has recognised the specificity of a 'masculine' structure of knowledges, this has, perhaps paradoxically, informed some feminist hostility to 'theory'. Toril Moi refers to the belief that "Theoretical discourse is . . . inherently oppressive, a result of masculine libidinal investment. Even the question 'What is it?' is denounced as a sign of the masculine impulse to imprison reality in rigid hierarchical structures."<sup>39</sup>

However, an alternative understanding of the process of theorising is possible, one which is not predicated on the positivity of the *model*. For example, there is the functioning of feminisms to problematise a radical theory-praxis split, and thus the possibility of privileging one or the other of these in any definitive way. Moira Gatens has identified three ways in which the relationship between feminism and philosophical discourse (theory) could be characterised. The first, consistent with the view cited by Moi, is that there is *no* acceptable relation, and that by implication, "Feminism . . . is pure *praxis*."<sup>40</sup> Secondly, some feminist theoretical projects have focused on *extending* 'masculine' theory, so that "Feminist theory adds to, or completes, traditional or existing philosophy, by filling in the 'gaps' in political, moral and social theory."<sup>41</sup> While this is argued to leave existing theoretical structures intact, addressing only the content, the third approach posits that "philosophy is not neutral in character, that the problem . . . is not merely a problem of content." Feminists who hold this position "take feminist theory or a feminist perspective as their starting point and *philosophy itself* as the object of study."<sup>42</sup>

Nevertheless, although it is clear that this has been the project of Irigaray, for example, in her deconstructive re-examination in *Speculum* of Western philosophical tradition from Plato to Freud and beyond, it is also possible to see, particularly in relation to psychoanalysis, the way in which the feminist project of extension (the second project) can be used not to complement and complete masculine theory, but to push it beyond its limits, undermining its lawful integrity. Feminisms refuse theoretical integrity and purity as belonging to the paradigm of paternal anxiety to guarantee the Name-of-the-Father by 'policing the desire of women'. Instead, they are able to invoke theory-praxis both strategically and together.<sup>43</sup> Spivak claims that "the best of French feminism encourages us to think of a double effort (*against* sexism and *for* feminism, with the lines

forever shifting),"<sup>44</sup> and that the feminist is/must be "an essentialist from time to time."<sup>45</sup> Braidotti's exploration of the politics of ontological difference is founded on her belief that "a feminist woman theoretician who is interested in thinking about sexual difference and the feminine today cannot afford not to be essentialist", while her discursive strategy "cannot be dissociated from the place of enunciation and the enunciative, textual game" in which she is involved.<sup>46</sup> The strategic and provisional negotiation of positions is found in Gallop's claim that "Identity must be continually assumed and immediately called into question."<sup>47</sup> However, such strategies form not only a basis for the development of a feminist political theory, but also describe the co-functioning and mutually questioning moments of feminist discourse. Paul Smith suggests that

contemporary feminist theory could perhaps be regarded as a project which recognizes that its aims would scarcely be met by either the positing of a fixed identity or the conjuring of some new and dispersed 'subject'. And, in this respect it is almost unique -- and thus salutary -- among the various discourses of resistance.<sup>48</sup>

6. III. (ii). **The Body at the Centre of the Thesis.** A similar strategic promiscuity has been employed in this thesis. Theoretical purity has been refused in the appropriation of elements of psychoanalytic theories of subjectivity, including both the Freudian and Lacanian master-discourses, and their feminist developments and contestations, as useful in the analysis of post-colonial (cultural) production of subjectivity, especially subjectivity in resistance. However, not 'faithful' to psychoanalysis, even in its varied moments, aspects of the work of Foucault, as well as *his* commentators -- followers and detractors -- have proved useful in analysis of post-colonial discourses. Texts analysed have included fiction, autobiography, and critical, cultural and theoretical writings, and the respective 'positions' of these have shifted between their functions as subjects and objects of analysis, in an unsystematic way.

The structure and relationship of chapters refuse linearity, and instead move in concentricities toward an in(con)clusive ending. In one sense, 'post-colonialism' has been placed at the centre and the argument has moved outward to consider the 'subject' and its institutional and political analogues, toward the need to dismantle the 'subject' in its unified sense. The recognition of the construction of subjectivity in discourse pushed the circles out toward the consideration of discourses of identity, belonging,



authenticity and resistance in the settler post-colonial societies of Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The 'outer' circles hold those elements 'beyond' dominant cultural constructions -- femininity and the body -- maintained, by the centrifugal forces of western phallocentrism, apart from the privileged male western subject; but also placed within the thesis to enact the bodily embracement of all culture, discourse and subjectification. The 'circles' may therefore be read outward -- the 'descriptive' argument -- and inward -- the 'critical' argument, in which the culturally and sexually inscribed body (of the text) is placed at the centre (though the artificiality of this distinction is demonstrated in their coterminosity). In this way, the thesis attempts to avoid both its own possible position as well as the position of the texts as "reduced to a passive 'feminine' reflection of an unproblematically 'given', 'masculine' world or self."<sup>49</sup>

**6. III. (iii). Abjection: The Return of the Irrepressible Body.** An important project of feminist theory continues to be the return of the sexed body to theories of subjectivity. One focus of this project has been the insertion, into phallogentric theories of subjective morphology, of the constitutively excluded maternal body, and the exploration of the consequent 'contamination' or 'failure' of that phallogentric subject. Therefore, it is useful to examine the implications of the masculine abandonment of corporeality in the constitution of subjectivity, with reference to Kristeva's postulate of 'abjection'. Despite the differences in their projects, both Irigaray and Kristeva are

committed to developing analyses of the production of sexed subjectivity. . . . In articulating the mother-child relation as a site for both the transmission and the subversion of patriarchal values, both affirm the archaic force of the pre-oedipal, which although repressed is thus also permanently preserved. Both affirm the fluid polymorphous perverse status of libidinal drives and both evoke a series of sites of bodily pleasure capable of resisting the demands of the symbolic order.<sup>50</sup>

In the infant's experience of the 'space' Kristeva calls the semiotic *chora*,<sup>51</sup> the mother and infant form an undifferentiated body characterised by the circulation of drives and impulses: the infant requires food to sustain it and the mother feeds the infant and fills its being; the infant expels the excess, that which is constituted out of what is necessary but would engulf it and threaten its being/self. Thus the expulsions initiate

the process of separation from the mother's body in order to establish the infant's own, 'proper' (*propre*) body. They constitute "the earliest attempts to release the hold of *maternal entity* even before ex-isting outside of her, thanks to the autonomy of language."<sup>52</sup> Defined in relation to the child's drives and the mother's activities of feeding and cleaning, the sites of introjection and expulsion form rims, the undecidable inside-outside borders of the body which will later become erotogenic zones, and which will both project and threaten the infant's autonomous being. The mother's activities thus constitute a preliminary mapping of the infant's body, so that "Maternal authority is the trustee of that mapping of the self's clean and proper body; it is distinguished from paternal laws within which, with the phallic phase and acquisition of language, the destiny of man will take shape."<sup>53</sup> It may therefore be said that despite the paternal incitement to symbolisation, the *first writing of the body* is the *mother's*.

Abjection is the continual and constitutive need for that which is ultimately threatening to the subject, and the never entirely successful processes of exclusion and expulsion (of the threat). It forms the precondition of Imaginary narcissism, where the positive investment in the perceived image of body-unity is predicated on separation from the mother. However the foundation of unity in the 'work' of separation returns to confront the Imaginary-Symbolic being with its archaic debt. This return instigates the subject's abjection: "a violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling;" so that with regard to the diachronic constitution of the subject, abjection is "co-existent with [narcissism] and causes it to be permanently brittle."<sup>54</sup>

The wholeness, unity, and autonomy of the body as perceived in Imaginary narcissism, are themselves (pre)conditions of the 'clean and proper' body of phallogentric, Symbolic subjectivity, where "The body must bear no trace of its debt to nature . . . in order to be fully symbolic."<sup>55</sup> That is, the Symbolic order of culture is psychically separated from nature and the body. Importantly, as will be shown, abjection as described by Kristeva is a condition of *phallogentric* subjectivity. Although formed in pre-Imaginary space through the delineation of its corporeal objects, it is a condition of the Symbolic subject, appearing through the gaps exposed by the instability of the subject in its articulation by language. The instability of the 'clean and proper' subject is manifested through the return of its

maternal, corporeal debt. As Kristeva explains, "If language, like culture, sets up a separation and, starting with discrete elements, concatenates an order, it does so precisely by repressing maternal authority and the corporeal mapping that abuts against them."<sup>56</sup> However, "from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master."<sup>57</sup>

The force of abjection is lost if it is understood in relation to processes of expulsion, separation and exclusion alone. It is precisely in the undecidable movement between these and the processes of introjection of what the subject requires to sustain its disavowed corporeal foundation. Abjection is "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite."<sup>58</sup> What is incorporated constitutes a threat to 'autonomy' by confronting the subject with its bodily dependence: the movement from without to within threatens to engulf, suffocate, overwhelm. What is expelled constitutes a threat to 'unity' by confronting the subject with the excess of itself, contradicting the Imaginary ideal, and forcing it to face the permeability of its boundaries, the provisionality of its propriety. What is expelled is both part of it and outside of it. There are, therefore, two constitutive movements or 'sites' of abjection, but they cannot be separated: "We may call it a border; abjection is above all ambiguity. Because while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens [sic] it -- on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger."<sup>59</sup>

Not only can these movements not be separated, but the inside-outside undecidability characterises each form of the abject, as much as the two together. Kristeva has identified as 'the abject' the return of corporeality as represented in those bodily substances which traverse the body's rims. Those associated with the threat to the subject from outside (identity) are represented by "Excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc)."<sup>60</sup> These are *parts of* the (bodily) subject *outside of* itself, or in other words the splitting of the self which contradicts Imaginary unity or integrity. Thus, while they must be expelled, their externalisation gives rise to the abjection of the subject. On the other hand, the threat from within (identity) is represented by "Menstrual blood. . . ; it threatens the relationship between the sexes within a social aggregate and, through internalization, the identity of each sex in the face of sexual difference."<sup>61</sup>

It confronts the subject with the materiality of the maternal body to which the subject owes life.

However, as has been pointed out, abjection is the condition of the phallogentric subject, and phallogentric subjectivity privileges masculinity as the position from which the subject is able to pass 'cleanly' through oedipalisation to its 'proper' place in the Symbolic, having 'definitively' separated from the mother's body. (Abjection marks the *failure* of such 'clean', 'proper' and 'definitive' status). By contrast, the girl's gradual, even incomplete, oedipalisation requires that she remain in contiguity with the mother. It is therefore necessary to examine the position of women in relation to abjection. Kristeva has posed the question of the fate of maternal authority by asking "what happens to such a repressed item when the legal, phallic, linguistic symbolic establishment does not carry out the separation in radical fashion -- or else, more basically, when the speaking being attempts to think through its advent in order better to establish its effectiveness."<sup>62</sup> However, the question of the specific relation of women to abjection may be posed, somewhat abjectly, to echo to Irigaray's 'scandalous' question regarding women and the unconscious: it then becomes, 'Are women subjects of abjection, or *are* they the abject?'

Processes of oedipalisation, entry into the Symbolic, and confrontation by the abject tend, in Kristeva's analysis, to replicate the Freudian-Lacanian privileging of an assumed *male* infant/subject. In other words, 'pure' abjection, acknowledging the difficulties of this expression, is a condition of the masculine subject of/in the phallogentric Symbolic. Phallogentrism can allow no identity as 'woman', while those socio-culturally, Imaginarily *marked* with the negative identity of 'woman', are offered two positions with regard to the Symbolic, neither of which constitutes active subjectivity: femininity as an Imaginary construct cannot be present but only represented through the Symbolic, not as spoken by and in the field of the Other (which masculinity is), but precisely unspoken by the Other; it is the articulation of emptiness, for there is 'nothing' to speak of. Maternity, on the other hand, "must not be confused with a *subject*, for maternity is a process without a subject,"<sup>63</sup> but it nevertheless offers indirect access to the Symbolic through the mother's relation to the husband/father, and to the child.

Female oedipalisation may occur in one of two ways. Identification with the mother and the transfer of desire from the mother to the father is understood as 'normal femininity', while the disavowal of (identification with) maternal 'castration' and the identification with the phallic father, is understood as the 'masculinity complex'. Unlike the male's passage through the oedipal crisis, neither option enables the girl both the 'clean' separation from the mother and a secure place within the Symbolic required for full and proper subjectivity. The position of 'normal femininity' is "too close" to the mother. Not only does the girl retain her maternal identification, but in her "desire for the father she becomes the/a mother. Her 'sex' (which in femininity is no-sex) becomes that of the mother, and "Kristeva argues that maternity satisfies a desire originally directed towards the mother's mother (the pre-oedipal desire to give/bear her mother a child): in this sense maternity functions on a 'homosexual-maternal' axis. . . . [It constitutes] a vertiginous identification that brings the mother into a corporeal contact with her mother's maternity."<sup>64</sup> If subjectivity is predicated on the break from the mother's body, 'normal femininity' in its tendency toward maternity is clearly problematic -- an impossible pathway to the necessary abandonment of the mother. Similarly, if the maternal *chora* is never fully repressed, and is indeed reproduced by the girl in her own maternity, how is it possible to speak of its *return* through the gaps in the Symbolic? In addressing this, it is helpful to examine the girl's second option for oedipalisation, the 'masculinity complex'. While the girl distances herself from the maternal body, as does the boy, she nevertheless fails to achieve her *proper* place in the Symbolic. 'Her' place is that of a pale reflection of the masculine, as her identification is with the reflection of the (phallic) masculine body. Her position in the Symbolic is not specifically *as a woman*. Therefore in the female 'masculinity complex', the cover of Symbolic subjectivity must be even more tenuous, perhaps no more severely invoked, but more permeable than for the male subject of the Symbolic order. Abjection could therefore be argued to be more permanently and more 'immediately' a condition of 'women' in phallocentrism.

#### 6. IV. Woman as Migrant Subject.

Elizabeth Jolley's *The Well*<sup>65</sup> explores the abjection of the subject threatened from outside identity, represented in motifs of intrusion and contamination. However, the specific abjection of Hester Harper is

founded in her 'identity' as a woman, and the difficult passage through oedipalisation which women inherit. Clearly, the denial of the maternal body, as the cost of subject-status, is a difficult matter for the girl, whose first love-object is also her immediate object of identification.

Hester Harper's childhood has included a traumatic scenario of separation from a mother-substitute, her governess, Hilde Herzfeld. Although older and more knowledgeable than the infant of the oedipal crisis when it occurs, Hester experiences a replication of crucial psychical aspects of the daughter's Imaginary separation from the mother. Prior to separation, many features of their relationship are suggestive of the maternal semiotic *chora*: they are *initially undifferentiated*, sharing the initials HH. Acknowledging this, "the two of them had initialled sheets, table cloths, table napkins, little linen towels and pillow slips with an elaborate monograph designed from a double aitch" (54). With Hilde, Hester had felt "safe and young and happy" (142). However, their idyll is dramatically ended one night when Hester goes to the bathroom where she finds Hilde "crouched on the floor, her nightdress spread like a tent, red splashed, round about her . . . [and] crying" (121). At this sight -- the blood she understood, "knowing something of the scene already -- never having been banned from the sheds and out houses" (122), to be the blood of the maternal body -- Hester abandons Hilde, rather than bringing help. She cannot acknowledge her father's intrusion into her ('mother-infant') relationship with Hilde:

Without really telling herself that she could not reveal to her father what it would seem she knew about him privately, she limped back to her own room, instead of going to his room or her grandmother's. Climbing into bed she pulled the blankets up and round the top of her head. Towards morning she heard her father's car turning on the gravel outside her window. (122)

Thus she is twice separated from Hilde by her father: first, her desire for Hilde is prohibited by her father's claiming Hilde's body to *his* desire; then access to her is abruptly denied in her removal from their home. However, Hester's own 'abandonment' of Hilde is ambivalent, this ambivalence evoked in Joan Kirkby's argument that Hester "betrays the voluptuous Hilde Herzfeld whom she adores rather than share Hilde with her father."<sup>66</sup> It is the first gesture in a separation which will remain unresolved and will 'haunt' her subsequent relationships, particularly with women. Hester represses her desire for Hilde, such that it returns

accompanied by the knowledge of its 'inappropriateness' (to the Symbolic Law).

Whereas the oedipal son retains a model of his primary attachment and gains identification with the father in order to attain access to the mother-substitute, the girl must abandon her first love object and may only identify with her (castration) in order to attain the desire of the father. This is 'normal femininity', in which the girl's desire is *exiled* to the place of the father.<sup>67</sup> However, the second possibility is the retention of the maternal desire and identification with the father. This is to emerge from oedipalisation into the 'masculinity complex'. Yet this identification does not equip *her* with subjectivity. She is marked as different, inferior, out of her proper place, and could thus be seen as a *migrant* to paternal/Symbolic positionality. Kristeva has suggested that the migrant be included among the representations of abjection.<sup>68</sup> This may be understood both in terms of the (necessary) parting from the constitutive maternal continent, whose 'markings' -- sex, colour/race, language/accent -- return through the 'gaps' in socio-Symbolic interaction in the new ('cultural') space, exposing and permeating the incomplete cover over the ('cultural') abyss between continents. The very term 'migrant' names the non-belonging or non-continuity which repeatedly confronts its subject's identification with, habitation of, and security in the 'new' Symbolic order.

Hester comes to identify with her father, and thus elements of her desire for Hilde are retained, even though repressed. Among these identifications, which must always be seen both in their similarity and their difference -- in other words in their *mimicry* of masculinity -- is her inheritance of her father's land: after he died, "she decided that she would continue to run the property," and she proceeds, "Following her father's ways and wearing all the keys on a gold chain round her neck" (17). Similarly, the nature of her relationship with Katherine manifests an ambivalent paternal identification. Hester symbolically 'buys' Katherine: "'What have you brought me then?'" her father . . . said as if asking for chocolate biscuits or sweets supposedly hidden in the groceries being unpacked./ 'I've brought Katherine, father,' Miss Harper said. . . . 'But she's for me,' she added" (10). While Veronica Brady argues that Katherine represents Hester's desire to bear a child by her father,<sup>69</sup> this would need to be predicated upon Hester's accession to 'normal femininity'. However, there is more evidence to suggest that Hester's

position in relation to both her father and to Katherine is founded in the paternal identification of the 'masculinity complex', whose instigation reaches back to the Hilde Herzfeld scenario.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, while Kirkby argues that "For her father Hester betrayed the one nurturing maternal figure she had ever known,"<sup>71</sup> this must be understood as not being (at least directly) in order to *win* her father *from* Hilde, but rather in order to *identify with* (please) him. Nevertheless, Gallop maintains that the girl who accedes to the 'masculinity complex' attempts, having been denied his penis (by the Law which forbids incest) to seduce the father through devotion to his Law.<sup>72</sup> Thus the frustrated desire for the father generates paternal identification and maternal abandonment, while maternal abandonment results in a "longing for a positive nurturing relationship with a woman that is inevitably betrayed."<sup>73</sup> While Brady argues that Miss Herzfeld separated Hilde from her father,<sup>74</sup> the affective content of Hester's subsequent memories, identifications and desires weighs more heavily in favour of seeing the crucial separation as that of Hester from Hilde, perpetrated by her father. For example, having returned with Katherine from her shopping trip, Hester *displaces* her father's claim to Katherine, thereby taking his place. Further, the relation of displacement of her father by Hester is suggested in the decline of his (phallic) power and influence in the household after the arrival of Katherine: "Hester spent less and less time with her father who, like a character in a play, wandered about the house trying to remember where his pistols were. The old man took it into his head to read cookery books" (13-14). The nature of the relationship with Katherine belongs primarily to the Father's Symbolic order, rather than the Mother's Semiotic. Hester considers Katherine "her new acquisition" (10), and indeed a maternal relation is specifically denied: "Hester had never known her mother. Neither had Katherine. They did not talk of this as the word seemed to have very little meaning for either of them" (47). Yet there is a 'fullness' to this silence, indicated when we are told that "She treated Katherine with an affectionate though severe generosity. She did not regard herself as a mother or even as an aunt. She did not attempt to give any name to the relationship. She realized quite quickly that she was possessive" (14). Hester's possessiveness casts her in a 'masculine' relation to Katherine. This is supported by the status of Hester's body as non-maternal. Katherine refers to Hester as being "'through your change of life,'" and beyond child-bearing (128). Further, the unwillingness to give a name to their relationship could suggest an



awareness of the 'impropriety' of the name, because it would require the admission of an inadmissible desire. Hester

knew privately that it gave her infinite secret pleasure to watch Kathy abandon herself to her own energy. Whenever she watched Kathy dancing, Hester, though outwardly showing no signs, moved in a wonderful freedom within herself. Her tiniest, most obscure muscles all took part. Unseen, her heart beat faster. She breathed more rapidly. In the privacy beneath her strict clothing she knew she was capable of an inner excitement which belonged only to her. It was a solitary experience but she did not mind this, being simply grateful for it. (73)

This frankly sexual desire is, nevertheless, submitted to the containment of the patriarchal Symbolic, and like prohibited *incestuous* desire, is coy about touch (10; 114). Perhaps as an extension of an erotic but socially contained (paternally connoted) relationship, Hester is more like a teacher than a parent to Katherine: "She planned to herself how she would keep Katherine, perhaps travel with her sometime, educate her and leave her all her money when she died" (12; see also 142).<sup>75</sup> It is crucial, however, that Hester's paternal identification can only be at best ambivalent. Her sex, as recognised in the field of the Other, does not conform with her Imaginary narcissistic identification. This phallic identification is itself a refusal of that with maternal castration. Thus she is confronted with the specific abjection of the 'masculinity complex' woman in phallocentrism. Her ability to repress the difference of herself from her phallic-ideal image is severely compromised by the return of that difference from *outside* identity, from the gaze of the Other. Hester's narcissism is satisfied within herself, but threatened when its objects are externalised. For example, Hester remembers a childhood photograph of herself, skilfully composed so that "the little body and limbs looked perfect, the lame foot was tucked in behind the good one. Perhaps that was why when she became older and painfully aware of the disfigurement, she had removed the photograph from its place and put it away" (47). Similarly, as well as the desire for Kathy she keeps as a kind of ideal within herself, Hester finds when singing songs associated with her idyllic Hilde-connoted childhood, that "In her head the songs were perfect. The sounds which emerged bore no relation to this perfection, but she did not mind this. The perfection somewhere *inside her* was enough" (10; my emphasis). The girl who oedipalises into the 'masculinity complex' retains the desire for the mother, and for the maternal space of the semiotic *chora*, before binary

division into inside and outside which constitutes the latter as threat (while the same division clarifies the danger of engulfment to the subject from the "ambiguous obscurity" of the merger of self and other).<sup>76</sup>

Hester attempts to create the uninterrupted, uncontaminated space of the semiotic *chora* with Katherine, replicating, through a Symbolic relationship, the (mediated) access to maternal desire available to the post-Oedipal boy. Although their relationship consists of 'I' and 'you' identities, these are Symbolically-articulated Imaginary constructs, images rather than bodies, and therefore not *sexually* differentiated and articulated. As I want to show, their relationship, as articulated in the Symbolic is, precisely, asexual, or sexually undifferentiated, and thus once again evocative of the mother-infant space of the *chora*. It is a relationship which could be described as Hester's abjection in phallocentrism, which exiled her from her first love and from the possibility of a stable subjectivity. It is a form of return, for Hester, of the oedipally disqualified impulses and desires, threatening her place in the Symbolic. The return of/to the *chora* is, therefore a nostalgic gesture of disavowal of oedipal displacement.

This return may be seen to coincide, in the novel, with gradual contractions of the social and spatial spheres of the women. At the time of Katherine's arrival, figured as an issue of exchange -- Katherine for Hilde/Hester's mother? -- Hester is "the daughter of the largest surrounding landscape" (8), while her status and her enjoyment of "the respect of the community" (8), is 'borrowed' from her father's position as landowner. Hester runs the business side of the land, and she and Katherine live in the large house which is actually two houses joined (25). However, Katherine's presence causes Hester to begin neglecting the business of the land, and their shared activities of cooking, sewing, embroidery, centre increasingly on the internal domestic space. Eventually the neglect of the farm leads to financial difficulties at first addressed, on Mr Bird's advice, by moving from the large house to a small cottage on a remote part of the land, renting the large house out. However, they also later face the need to sell the land (54-6). With this, Hester loses her (father's) community status, her borrowed position in the socio-Symbolic. Mr Bird is uncharacteristically rude to her (60), and she discovers at the community dance that "Harper's good reputation was, all at once, overnight it seemed, Borden's. . . . She knew at once the place would be

called Bordens" (68). Therefore, Hester's and Katherine's lives have withdrawn spatially to the small cottage and immediate garden, while social influence and interaction also decline.

Within this reduced space, however, "their life was all pleasure" (38), seemingly a matter of the circulation of drives and satisfactions. Their excessive wastefulness defies any principle of reality represented by Mr Bird, but it represents the 'external' principle of 'American-style' consumerism, an influence which accompanied the arrival of Katherine (from 'outside'). Hester works to keep Katherine 'young', encouraging her to dress like a pre-pubescent child, so that in psychical terms, 'her sex' is undifferentiated from the 'little boy's'. It is therefore doubly undifferentiated from Hester's ('masculinity complex'). However, this relation is fragile, vulnerable to fracturing intrusions, and Hester cannot completely disavow this danger, and thus the status of their relationship as already 'lost', as determined by the 'primal' loss of Hilde. She dreads the thought of Katherine leaving. Choosing tapes as a gift for her, Hester "studied a few of the titles, 'I can't let you go' and 'Never Never Say Goodbye to me' and 'Hold me Just a little longer.' She smiled in a twisted way, one of her little smiles" (105). Hester admits to herself that "she did not want Katherine to go away. She loved her and wanted her near always as she was now. The thought of her belonging to someone else . . . was unbearable" (109). Indeed, it is the intrusion of any term of separation between them which Hester resists. She is attracted to the idea of "Two people entirely alone, together and happy" (20), and consequently, "They did not encourage visitors" (21). Outsiders are by definition *intruders*, whether into their physical space, or into their lives and relationship. Mrs Borden points out at the dance that "'it is not right to keep Katherine, a young woman like Katherine shut away'" (72), and that "'that dress, Kathy's not her age in it. It's too nave, but'" (75), which Hester gradually understands means 'naïve'. She later resentfully reflects, "What right had Mrs Borden to intrude in this way?" (109).

Similarly, Hester dreads the arrival of Katherine's friend, Joanna. Described as "now out" from a place which "was not a prison really . . . only a place to get better from 'what she'd been taking'" (42), Joanna increasingly represents a disturbance to her relationship with Katherine. Hester is shaken by the realisation of Katherine's wish for companionship of her own age (42), and although she suggests that Joanna come and stay,

"with her usual honesty she went on to tell herself that she was jealous" (45). It is within the context of this jealousy that Joanna comes to represent not simply an intrusion, but a source of contamination in their lives. She would be "Rubbish company, a girl who could do nothing but harm. Hester was vague in her mind about the life this other girl could have had, but it was dirty and infected and should be kept away from the freshness and purity of their own lives" (45).

The 'freshness and purity' of their lives is predicated, like the purity of Symbolic subjectivity, on the repression of the excesses of the body, enabling them to conform to the masculine phallic ideal. Specifically, it is the repression of the maternal body, and it is to this threatening entity that Mrs Borden, herself heavily pregnant, alludes when she suggests that Katherine "'must think of men, a man? Sometimes?'" (72). 'Men' are also possibly part of the contamination represented by Joanna (See 104). With her visit imminent, Hester and Katherine embark on "a merciless cleaning programme" (158), which could be seen in part as not simply a preparation, but from Hester's perspective as a symbolic ritual of purification prompted by the very (abject) thought of the contamination she will bring. Again, therefore, Hester's and Katherine's relationship is characterised by abjection. It is founded on Hester's fear of the threat to it from outside, and sustained by her activities of 'policing' the boundaries of their physical and social space. However, as Grosz explains, "The abject cannot readily be classified, for it is necessarily ambiguous, undecidably inside and outside (like the skin of milk), dead and alive (like the corpse), autonomous and engulfing (like infection and pollution). It disturbs identity, system and order, respecting no definite positions, rules, boundaries or limits" (74). Abjection is in fact the sensation of this ambiguous attraction/repulsion. It is figured in Hester's response to Mr Bird's 'bending of the boundaries' of her property (propriety?): "He pushed one leg over the fence. At the sight of the wires being pushed down even more Hester flinched" (90). Abjection testifies, as Kristeva argues, to the fact that "there are lives not sustained by *desire*, as desire is always for objects. Such lives are based on *exclusion*."<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, the undecidability of abjection means that the threat to Hester's and Katherine's relationship is also to be found within.

The inside/outside ambiguity of the abjection of the 'clean and proper' self is most directly and centrally represented in the figure of the body in

the well. There are three significant placements in the novel of the incident which instigates the presence of the body. It is described at the beginning of the novel, suggesting its status as an originary event; it is described and developed almost exactly in the middle of the novel, suggesting its centrality to, or dominance in, the meaning of the text; and its return as the beginning of Hester's narrative at the conclusion suggests both the return and repetition of objects of repression, and the act of re-symbolisation. The re-symbolisation may be read as either containing the body within fiction, thus controlling abjection; or it may be read as raising questions about the status of the preceding text: was it only ever a story she told the Borden boys? Initially, the 'body' is represented as an unexpected and out-of-place presence on Hester's and Katherine's track one night. Its precise nature is uncertain, but it is apparently killed in a collision with their Toyota ute, so that its status becomes that of the 'body' or corpse. Hester immediately decides it -- both its existence (presence) and death (absence) -- must be hidden from public knowledge, and it is disposed of down their well. However, it is the rôle it assumes in their lives after this attempt at closure of the incident which elucidates its full significance, both as presence and as absence.

As I have stated, the precise nature of the 'presence' is uncertain or vague. Initially, it is variously "something on the track" and "someone there" (5). Hester refers to having "caught something on the bar," but when she speculates that "there may be someone else around" (6), suggests that it is human. By circumstantial or associative evidence, it would seem that he -- for 'it' is only ever gendered male -- was an intruder who had already broken into and robbed the Bordens on pretence of looking for work (91). However, his status as 'thief' is complicated by the folklore which begins to develop around the mysterious combination of unexpected characteristics for a 'criminal': he is pleasantly spoken, has a wife and baby waiting for him, and altogether they are, according to Mrs Grossman, who "claimed more knowledge of the unknown[,] 'Ever such nice people'" (100). He is therefore both within and outside the law: he is the abject.<sup>78</sup>

He is also an intruder, on a number of levels, for Hester and Katherine. Not only was 'he' -- the ontology of the man/thing may be provisionally accepted -- on their track, but he had also (possibly) been inside the cottage earlier. Finding a sum of money gone, a fact that is Katherine's discovery,

Hester "pulled open the cupboards. She looked at her own empty helpless hands. 'He must have been in the house.' Disgust made her choke" (86). Similarly,

It made her feel sick to think that someone, a thief, had been in the kitchen. As she opened the door she thought she could smell the intruder. Perhaps every room and corner of the house was tainted. These thoughts and the knowledge of what lay at the bottom of the well took away any wish for the tea which was brewing in the patient teapot. She supposed this was what fear was. (92-3)

We have seen that the corpse represents that form of abjection associated with bodily waste and decay, the external threat to identity. The corpse is a reminder of the materiality of the body; the abjection it precipitates is "a personal and cultural horror of the subject's (and culture's) finitude and material limits."<sup>79</sup> The abject status is redoubled in *The Well* by the corpse's apparent possession of their money, for like the corpse, money is also a reminder of the materiality of the body that abjects the subject.<sup>80</sup> However, the corpse as *body* is both dead and alive, and just as Hester is subject to involuntary physical responses -- in reluctance to incorporate bodily sustenance, and more importantly, in impulses to *expel* through choking and vomiting -- abjection is, Grosz continues, "a sickness at one's own body, at the body beyond the 'clean and proper' thing, the body of the subject."<sup>81</sup> Hester's paternal/masculine identification implies the necessary exclusion of the body. She is sickened when confronted with its materiality and desires to live outside of its maternity.

To understand the ways in which the corpse/body is multivalent in the text, it is useful to examine the circumstances of the women's collision with it/him. On the night of the 'accident', Hester and Katherine have been to the dance in the community hall. It is here that Hester has watched Kathy dancing, watched her "abandon herself to her own energy," while the effect of the dancing on Hester is to make her feel "as if her hair was loose and as if her clothes were bright and light and as if they moved too, easily with her own rhythm" (73). It is also there that Mrs Borden has commented on Katherine's dress and her likely interest in men and marriage. When they leave the dance, "Katherine, elated with the evening, [has] insisted on driving" (77). Further, she discusses, while driving, the romantic fantasy of being "'married to the man of your dreams'", and suggests that she could make baby clothes for the fête (79), both of which receive dismissive responses from Hester. But Katherine

*drives* too fast, with too much energy, suggesting the collision as one with her externalised sexual/maternal *drives*. It is also the object of Hester's fears (of those desires in Katherine and her potential loss of Katherine to these desires/a man). That Hester insists on the disposal of the object of collision/confrontation (to protect Katherine), suggests her Symbolic repression of the abjecting excesses of the body. Indeed, abjection as been described as "a deep *well* of memory that is unapproachable and intimate,"<sup>82</sup> and the image of the 'abyss' of abjection is also suggestive of the well. Grosz refers to "an abyss at the borders of the subject's existence,"<sup>83</sup> and "the abyss that haunts and terrifies the subject."<sup>84</sup> This is precisely the placement and effect of the well and its inhabitant on Hester and Katherine. Further, it becomes this 'haunting abyss' from the time it bears an inhabitant, so that it is associated with the (abjection of) the pregnant/maternal body, which itself is the splitting of the subject beyond 'Symbolic oneness'. As has been shown, the sexual/maternal body has been excluded from their lives and relationship. Katherine has deliberately been kept 'young'. Further, Hester has demonstrated a deep repugnance for the idea of sex between men and women: "Hester in the presence of so many clean couples, for they did look so well washed and ironed, wondered at their cleanliness in relation to their own cowshed activities" (70), thereby evoking Kristeva's statement that "The abject confronts us, on the one hand, with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of *animal*."<sup>85</sup> In relation to this abjection, Hester "almost moaning aloud, said over and over that she did not want a husband for Kathy" (118), and "faced the truth that she did not want to lose Kathy, especially not into vulgarity and loss of innocence" (119).

However, symbolic of the irrepressible body, which will always return to haunt the subject, the 'man' in the well cannot be denied. At first its 'return' is suggested in their shared and terrifying perception at night of "a noise, a faint noise of movement, strangely close to them. It suggested merely skin and bones, dry, rasping lightly on each other, eerie and haunting" (83). There is temporary and partial relief in the rationalisation that "'It's only a poor moth, your intruder,' Hester, knowing her heart was pounding, laughed" (84). Katherine is repelled by the suggestion that she should go down into the well to retrieve the money, for as Hester reasons, "Often something had to die so that something else could live and flourish. Like rotten fruit discarded, the dead man at the bottom of the well was not her concern. All they had to get from him was the useful and

valuable thing which he had down there with him. The money" (107). But Katherine refuses, "'I won't! He's dead. I'd have to touch a dead man. I might have to look for the money on him, I'd have to touch him'. . . . I'm going to be sick. Miss Harper, he might have it next to his body, next to his skin, I couldn't do it'" (87).

Their abjection is fully realised, however, when the body returns, 'literally' through the Symbolic: he begins to speak from the abyss. Returning from a journey to the village to buy rope to help retrieve the money, Hester finds that Katherine has done none of the household chores and the food has disappeared. She is shocked by Katherine's explanation:

'I gave the meat to the man and I gave him the bread and ... '

'What man!'

'The man down the well, Miss Harper, dear. He said he was hungry and anything would do. . . . '

'Katherine!' Hester's voice was deep with warning. But Katherine, smiling said, 'Oh, Miss Harper, dear, he isn't dead at all. I heard him. Soon after you'd gone I heard him. I heard him praying. He prayed 'Our Father' and he called on Jesus to get him out of the hole.' (112)

Katherine becomes enmeshed in a relation of fascination with the man in the well, sometimes one of fear -- "'He wants out Miss Harper. I'm scared Miss Harper. He's going to kill us both'" (126; also 133) -- and increasingly predominantly, one of attraction -- "'I love him you see Miss Harper, dear, I love him and he says he loves me and he's glad I didn't kill him only knocked him out. When he's up from down there he's going to ask me to marry him'" (115). Thus the well, as the maternal body, as the abject, "beckons the subject ever closer to its edge,"<sup>86</sup> while in its signification of the maternal body, it is significant that it is Katherine whom it begins to attract more than repel, and who approaches it through acts of nurturance (providing food).

Katherine develops an involved fantasy of romantic desire, heavily drawn from the traditions of American popular romance and film, and tending towards the conventional resolutions of weddings, marital bliss, and babies (115;118). Thus she accepts her own maternal body, and her relation to the Symbolic proffered by 'normal femininity'. This is emphasised in the nature of that relation for the girl as the 'exile' of her desire, and the intensification of the fake American idiom and accent she



had always playfully adopted (5;13;41;57), when relaying these messages and plans to Hester: "'He's very bruised, he says, but it's not too serious he don't think. . . . Oh but Miss Harper, dear, it's trew,' Katherine's imitation American accent irritated Hester. . . . 'I've bin telling him all about yew'" (113). Therefore, while her desire is figured as 'foreign' in the adoption of an outlandish accent, feminine desire is paradoxically dependent upon, indeed constituted in, a foreign Symbolic for its articulation. In other words, the American accent is ambivalently foreign and constitutive, echoing the construction of the colonised subject, and suggesting the neo-colonial relation of seduction of Australian culture by American popular culture. Further, the paternal connotations of the American accent and the discourse of romance are evoked in Hester's fear of its intrusive function, similar to a 'cultural contamination', in her idyll with Katherine. Hester is afraid that "Katherine in that fake American accent would blurt out the whole thing. It was a pity that the accent had been encouraged, it had been a little joke between them but now it played an alarming rôle in the representation of unreality" (124). The threat of the Law includes both the consequences of the accident and the disposal of the body, and the admission of the divisive phallus into the time-space of the *chora*.

Hester both resists Katherine's messages from the man as evidence of her deep disturbance, and yet finds her own certainty, the Symbolic cover which divides "the proper and the improper, the clean and the unclean, order and disorder,"<sup>87</sup> foundering. She refers to "the dead man" (119), but there is also an ambiguous moment when Hester decides "it was better to keep Katherine away from the well. She tried to think of ways of detaining her so that, she stumbled in her thoughts, so that he might, if left unattended for long enough, die -- again" (127). Here it is unclear whether Hester attributes his 'survival' solely to Katherine's imaginative engagement, or whether she is unsure herself of his life or death. She insists to Katherine that "'Whoever is down there is dead -- D. E. A. D. -- dead' . . . 'otherwise he would not be down there'" (131), and yet she has to check herself: "how could she even think about what he, the man in the well was supposed to have said when he was not even alive" (132; see also 151). Eventually even Hester's senses respond to the presence of the body in the well: "She shivered with an intense cold and she had to clench her teeth against waves of nausea. She thought she heard a voice somewhere outside. She thought someone was calling and calling" (145), and looking

into the well with torchlight, "She thought ... she saw ... a man's head which, because of being drenched was small, sleek and rounded" (148), an image located on the border of life (birth), and death (drowning). Hester's abjection is strongly associated with bodily processes of expulsion. Although intensifying with the advent of the body in the well, the pattern has already been established in which Hester's symptoms appear soon after there has occurred some threat to the exclusivity of her relationship with Katherine. Following their agreement that Joanna should visit, for example, Hester is afflicted with a headache "accompanied by that total lack of dignity suffered during bouts of vomiting, not once or twice but several times" (47). This response suggests the inseparable necessity of, and fear of the separation she cannot consciously accept. There is an early incident in Hester's life, represented as the 'original' event to which these bouts of sickness refer, again a point of separation when immediately following Hilde's departure, "arrangements were being made for Hester to go away to school, 'as girls did in books', the words began to pound like the pain of the first headache, the first sick headache" (122). Katherine's developing preoccupation with the 'dead man', and particularly the development of her romantic/sexual attraction to him and fantasies about motherhood, but also her references to the physical impossibility of Hester's maternity, elicit Hester's abject sick headaches. Thus her abjection relates not only to Katherine's potentially maternal body and the threat of separation from Hester that this represents, but also the *inability* of Hester's own body to be that object of desire, that phallus, for Katherine. In other words, the body of the 'man' confronts Hester with the psychical import of her *female* body, a body which, though oedipalised into the 'masculinity complex', cannot aspire to the status in the Symbolic of proper masculinity because of the discriminating and disqualifying return of the phallic gaze.

Hester intuits that "the awful truth about the dead body pushed ruthlessly down the well . . . . might emerge at any time. But even if it never did and she was, for the most part, able to keep it out of her mind, she knew it would return time and again" (119). It is the return of the repressed memory of the traumatic circumstances of Hilde's leaving which surfaces for Hester from the depths of the well, these linked by the image of the maternal body. She is sleepless with "this memory coming to the surface now with inexplicable suddenness..." (121), and haunted by "The night when Hilde cried so much, blood-stained and frightened in the candlelit bathroom" (149-50). For Hilde too, Hester had failed to be the

phallus, or total object of her desire. Instead, Hester's desire is 'excessive', superfluous and improper in relation to the Symbolic body. Therefore, the threat from outside 'identity' posed by the 'intruder' also exposes the threat from within the ideally unified, integrated self.

Hester believes that "The dead man, the intruder, had distorted their relationship. He had brought disaster and a remedy must be found" (134). In a sense this is true, but the intrusion from outside has also exposed the 'distortions' or Others which already inhabit their relationship as those aspects of themselves which cannot be integrated or reconciled with the notion of purity. What intrudes into their relationship is the abject return of these differences which had been disavowed, and the affect associated with them repressed. For example, despite Hester's preoccupation with Katherine's 'purity' there are many indications throughout the novel that Katherine is not what she seems. This has been suggested in her representation of 'cultural contamination' through her employment of American popular romance idiom. Further, however, Katherine's facial expressions occasionally trouble Hester, such as the "squint [which] gave her some uneasiness [but] she dismissed it at once" (16). Later she is caused to reflect on

the travelling tinker and his shifty eyes, eyes like Katherine's were just now, she thought. She wondered how Katherine could suddenly look dishonest. She had to realize that it was not sudden, that she had always dreaded a revelation of something not quite truthful. . . . [P]eople often judged by what they feared or knew existed in themselves. (116)

Katherine has, and is aware of, some ambivalent skills, which Hester notices, but quickly rationalises: "There was nothing Katherine could not copy or learn. She seemed to have all the makings of an efficient criminal. . . . Katherine could be an excellent business woman if necessary" (20). She even jokes to Hester, having skilfully removed the keys from round Hester's neck, "'Make a good burglar, wouldn't I'" (78).

In this way, a link is established between Katherine and the man in the well. This has been increasingly suggested in Mr Bird's warnings to Hester, about

'Any person, Miss Hester,' he said, 'as you are not acquainted entirely with, I mean what's in their lives, what's gone before and such.' Not noticing Hester's increasingly stormy frown he continued, 'You being

good hearted don't have the knowing of the bad sides of people.' Irritated, Hester told him to mind his own business and to confine his remarks to the running of the farm. 'What I am saying concerns just that,' he said in a low voice. (31; see also 61; 76)

Katherine's self-conscious use of the word 'he' in attributing the disappearance of the money to the man could be seen as another self-betrayal of her integrity, but the *almost* incontrovertible evidence that it was she who stole the money occurs when "Katherine's voice was soft like honey. . . . '[H]e sent this up just now for our shopping. He says he's sorry he took your money Miss Harper and he says to tell you here's a hundred dollars for you to go to town -- he wants oysters. . . . She held out a crumpled note" (131). The ontological status of the body in the well -- man? animal? real? imagined? -- is most clearly problematised in this suggestion that Katherine has had the money all the time. At the very least, the assumption that the young man seeking work and the burglar are the same person, and that this was the man who was killed on the track, becomes questionable. Nevertheless 'his' function as intruder is the important point, and as the intruder from within as much as outside Hester's and Katherine's lives.

Hester's response of disavowal of the abject intrusion of this Otherness in their relationship, necessarily returns to haunt and terrify her. Disavowal becomes increasingly difficult and Hester finds herself beginning to feel "irritated as she felt the thin, nimble and, as she thought, thieving fingers moving over her scalp and in her hair (134). Similarly, sleeping fitfully, she repeatedly feels for the keys round her neck, and she dreams that Katherine has tied her by her plaited hair to the back of a chair (146-7). Disavowal and repression have been Hester's habitual responses to the knowledge of the body, and when Katherine expresses anger and resentment at this, she reassures Katherine, "'You realize don't you that I put the body in the well to save you. . . . I got rid of the body, of the evidence'" (138). However, the failure of the well (now also able to signify the unconscious) properly to contain the body prompts Hester to make the further move of having it closed over completely, "'fixed all the way round'" (153). For "Abjection is what the symbolic must reject, cover over or contain."<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, even with that done, "Hester, at the back of her mind, wondered whether it was possible to really close off the incident in this simple way" (160). Katherine, distanced from the body, has changed. She "had developed a different way of speaking. Her voice was

flat and often she did not look up when she replied to anything Hester said" (160). The Symbolic is an alien order for Katherine. She inhabits it only in the abject manner of the exile. Significantly, it is at this time that a letter from Joanna arrives: "'She, Joanna's into religion,' she said, her voice beginning to lift. She's an evangelist. Oh, Miss Harper, dear,' she said with more life, 'she wants me to be an evangelist too. . . . Evangelist!' she said. Isn't that just Great! America! Great!'" (161). It may also now be recalled that among the first things Katherine reports hearing from the man in the well is his praying and calling upon Jesus to free him. Katherine's 'otherness' persists, therefore, in her excitement about America (more than once associated in the novel with 'unreality'), but also in the regaining of something of her former self at the thought of evangelism (the purveying of the Truth of the Word). Just as Hester is apprehensive about the inconclusiveness of the cover over the well, Grosz claims that "It is impossible to exclude these psychically and socially threatening elements with any finality."<sup>89</sup> Similarly, Katherine's response to evangelism is not the exclusion of the abject, but its *displacement*, for "religion functions to wrest the subject away from the abyss of abjection."<sup>90</sup>

However, for Hester, the Symbolic is the order in which her masculine identification and subjectivity are articulated. With the threat of the (material, sexual) body disposed of, Hester allows the workmen who sealed the well into her kitchen (159), and even expects and seeks Mr Bird, to whom she had been so rude. However, when he does not arrive and cannot be found, she feels "as if she was on the edge of a black hole . . . [,] a great fear and dread" (164), suggesting the return of abjection. Reading through the books in which he had meticulously kept the details of her farm's business, "She understood . . . at once, that she needed to be looked after, cared for, more than ever. She had never felt so afraid and so alone" (167). Hester is thus confronted with her lack of autonomy, her 'incompleteness' in relation to the social order.

There are (at least) two possible ways of concluding this discussion. The one which retains the 'integrity' of the reading of the novel in terms of abjection would point to Hester's establishment of wider community and social contact, whose 'dangers' -- she is travelling with the enormously pregnant Mrs Borden, and Dobby Borden notices the broken spotlight on the roo bar (172) -- are 'contained' by her submitting the 'body' to the Symbolic in the construction of a narrative (175-6). Thus while

Katherine appears to displace the abject, Hester sublimates it.<sup>91</sup> However, a different and more subversive (for the phallogentric Symbolic) and redemptive (for women, and for all subjects of cultural abjection) reading is possible.

In this reading, Hester, while necessarily located within the Symbolic, confronts it with the 'body', thus putting it under pressure. In renouncing her earlier concern to up-hold Symbolic 'purity' -- her identification with the Law -- there is acknowledgement of the possibility that she may have more to gain in its 'contamination'. She embarks, at the end of the novel, on the story of the body, putting into discourse what the Symbolic excludes, thus generating the ambivalent attraction-repulsion of the abject. This has been (or, for the Bordens, 'is to be') illustrated in the story of attraction and repulsion in relation to the well itself, and is further demonstrated in the story-telling situation with Mrs Borden's agreement with her sons' pleas, "'Make it real scarey!'"': "'Yes, Miss Harper, do that. . . . Scare 'em witless. They'll love it!'" (175). The production of her story in the company of pregnant Mrs Borden and her boys locates it (and Hester) within the contaminated space of discourse and social relations.

As well as producing the story of the body, the novel may be read in terms of the story *as* body. The structure of *The Well*, rather than linear, is circular. The beginning of the story Hester tells the Borden boys links back to the opening of the novel, so that the reader is uncertain of the status of what has just been read: the events upon which her narrative will be based, or that narrative itself? The story itself generates uncertainties: was there a man? was he an elaborate realisation of Hester's paranoia, or Katherine's desire? did he steal the money? did Katherine have the money? Further, the novel/story includes elements of self-referentiality. In Mrs Grossman's shop, Hester meets a writer who tells her "'I'm writing a perfectly horrific little drama set, do you see, in a remote corner of the wheat. Very regional. . . . I need an intruder to distort a relationship'" (157). Any apparent stability of reference is disturbed by other possible interpretations, defying unity, so that the reader is situated within the circulation of responses which call upon the Semiotic, rather than the dominant teleological trajectory of the Symbolic.

Of course it would be naïve to claim that this in itself constitutes any movement of liberation from the Law, or that there is any access to a 'true'

body, unmediated by ideological systems, which will dismantle the authority of the Law. The cover of the 1987 Penguin edition of *The Well* proclaims it to be 'a dark and disturbing parable.' One reading in these terms would find it to be a parable of the impossibility of any place outside of its authority before its terms have been unwritten -- de-scribed. Thus it describes the effects, for women, of the (phallogentric) Law; of their containment within the possibilities of either exiled (excluded) or migrant (provisionally and partially included) subjectivity. It is not necessary to have recourse to a notion of an 'authentic' unscripted femininity which would be liberated from the imposition of (patriarchal) ideology in order to dismantle the terms of the latter; however, it is necessary to acknowledge the specificity of any inscription in discourse even if that place can not be specified without invoking another ideology. Further, the inscription of all subjectivity in discourse does not preclude the recognition, critique and dismantling of oppressive and colonising discourses which (dis-)place their Others on/to the margins of their own purview. Subjectivity is where one is in discourse.

This chapter has discussed hybridity as a problem(atic) of settler post-colonial discourse and subjectivity, and through an analysis of the invisible term of sexual difference in the encounter with the other, has explored some of the consequences of the return of the female body to subjective morphology. In Chapter Seven I extend this discussion of the abjection of the phallogentric subject into consideration of post-colonial subjectivity, discourse and culture. Here, I posit it as a second problem(atic) of settler post-colonialism in the articulation and negotiation of discourses of inclusion and identity.

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Notes.

- <sup>1</sup> Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817," *Critical Inquiry*, 12 (1985), p. 156.
- <sup>2</sup> Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," p. 156.
- <sup>3</sup> Benita Parry, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse," *Oxford Literary Review*, 9, No.1-2 (1987), p. 34.
- <sup>4</sup> Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," p. 154.
- <sup>5</sup> As will be shown, it is the processes by which the "colonial scene" instigates "the intervention of historicity, mastery, or mimesis" which also provide the ground of critical intervention ("Signs Taken for Wonders," p. 150).
- <sup>6</sup> Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," p. 156.
- <sup>7</sup> Stephen Slemon, "Modernism's Last Post", in Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin (eds), *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 3. An earlier version of this article was published in *Ariel*, 20, No. 4 (1989).
- <sup>8</sup> In "Signs Taken for Wonders," Bhabha points out that "the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something *different* -- a mutation, a hybrid" (p. 153), which as argued above differentiates the colonial encounter from the relation of Nation to its Others. However, this must be understood not to define the relations of subjects within Nation, but its formation as a construct or identity.
- <sup>9</sup> Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders," p. 152.
- <sup>10</sup> Mark Williams, "Looking Sideways: English Studies, Tradition, and Cross-Cultural Comparisons," *SPAN*, 28 (1989), p. 25.
- <sup>11</sup> Williams, p. 26.
- <sup>12</sup> Linda Hutcheon, "Circling the Downspout of Empire," in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 172. An earlier version of this article was published as "Circling the Downspout of Empire: Post-Colonialism and Postmodernism," in *Ariel*, 20, No. 4 (1989). Further, Diana Brydon argues in "The White Inuit Speaks: Contamination as Literary Strategy," in Adam and Tiffin (eds), that "Hutcheon's assumption that the post-colonial speaks with a single voice leads her to belabour the necessity of resisting the totalising application of a term that in her analysis would blur differences and deny the power relations that separate the native post-colonial experience from that of the settlers. Certainly turning to the post-colonial as a kind of touristic 'me-tooism' that would allow Canadians to ignore their own complicities in imperialism would be a serious misapplication of the term. Yet, as far as I know, discussions of Canadian post-colonialism do not usually equate the settler with the native experience, or the Canadian with the Third World," (p. 194). Perhaps even more importantly, Brydon discusses the risks to *post-colonial native cultures* of the 'cult of authenticity' which is implicit in arguments like those of Hutcheon and Williams, and differently in those of native peoples (pp. 195-6). This danger, whose recognition has informed discussions in Section II of this thesis, will be developed further in this chapter, and in Chapter Seven in the discussion of post-colonialism and postmodernism.
- <sup>13</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), p. 254.



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- 14 Homi Bhabha, "The other question: difference, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism," in Francis Barker et al. (ed.), *Literature, Politics and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference 1976-84* (London: Methuen, 1986), p. 160.
- 15 In "The other question," Bhabha states that his essay "is indebted to traditions of post-structuralist and psychoanalytic theory, especially in their feminist formulation" (p. 149).
- 16 In "The other question," Bhabha argues that the stereotype "is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. It is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation that . . . [denies] the play of difference that the negation through the other permits" (p. 162).
- 17 See Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (trans.) Gillian C. Gill (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 47-50; also, Irigaray, "This Sex Which Is Not One," in *This Sex Which is Not One* (trans.) Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 23-33.
- 18 Luce Irigaray, "Women's Exile: Interview with Luce Irigaray," (trans.) Couze Venn *Ideology and Consciousness*, 1 (1977), p. 66.
- 19 Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989), p. 130.
- 20 Elizabeth Grosz, *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1990), p. 122.
- 21 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 131.
- 22 Irigaray, "Women's Exile," p. 64.
- 23 Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*, p. 77.
- 24 Irigaray, "Women's Exile," p. 66.
- 25 Irigaray, "Women's Exile," p. 66.
- 26 Irigaray, "Women's Exile," p. 71.
- 27 Grosz, *Jacques Lacan*, p. 173.
- 28 Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," *Signs*, 1, No. 4 (1976), p. 877, n.1.
- 29 Anna Munster, "Playing With a Different Sex: Between the Covers of Irigaray and Gallop," in E.A. Grosz, Terry Threadgold, David Kelly, Alan Cholodenko and Edward Colless (eds), *Futur\*Fall: Excursions into Post-Modernity* (Sydney: Power Institute Publications, 1986), p. 124.
- 30 Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 177.
- 31 Rosi Braidotti, "Ethics revisited: Women and/in philosophy," in Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross (eds), *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986), p. 59.
- 32 Braidotti, "Ethics Revisited," p. 60.

33 In "Women's Work: The Blind Spot in the Critique of Political Economy," in Maria Mies, Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen and Claudia von Werlhof, *Women: The Last Colony* (London: Zed Books, 1988), Claudia Von Werlhof argues "Not only are women the first human beings in history to be exploited, their exploitation also provided a general pattern for subsequent forms of exploitation of man and nature" (p. 25).

34 Anne Summers, for example, has identified four conditions of colonisation, or the colonial situation: the invasion and conquering of a territory; the cultural domination of its inhabitants; the institution of control by divide and rule; and the extraction of profits from the colonised territory. She then equates these conditions with women's condition in patriarchy, positing: that women's bodies constitute their (only accessible) territory, over which they are denied control; the imposition of the cultural code of femininity; the division of women into 'Damned Whore' and 'God's Police' stereotypes; and the profits reaped by the capitalist/patriarchal system(s) and by individual men from women's colonised state. See Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police: The Colonization of Women in Australia* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1975), pp. 198-201.

35 See Kirsten Holst-Petersen and Anna Rutherford (eds), *A Double Colonization: Colonial and Post-Colonial Women's Writing*. (Mundelstrup, Denmark: Dangaroo Press, 1986).

36 In "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *boundary 2*, 12/3, 13/1 (1984), Chandra Talpade Mohanty refers to the use of the term 'colonization' by "feminist women of color in the U.S. to describe the appropriation of their experiences and struggles by hegemonic white women's movement" (p. 333); while Gayatri Spivak reflects that "It seems particularly unfortunate when the emergent perspective of feminist criticism reproduces the axioms of imperialism" ("Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," *Critical Inquiry*, 12, No 1 [1985], p. 243).

37 In "A Half-Colonization: The Problem of the White Colonial Woman Writer," *Kunapipi*, Vol.10, No. 3 (1988), Robin Visel explains: "The white-settler woman and her descendants occupy a privileged position in comparison to their darker native or slave-descended sisters. While the native woman is truly doubly-oppressed or doubly-colonized, by male dominance as well as by economic and social dominance, the white settler woman can best be described as half-colonized. Although she too is oppressed by white men and patriarchal structures, she shares the power and guilt of the colonists" (p. 39).

38 Maria Mies, "Introduction," in Mies et. al, p. 1.

39 Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 111.

40 Moira Gatens, "Feminism, philosophy and riddles without answers," in Pateman and Gross (eds), p. 14.

41 Gatens, 16.

42 Gatens, p. 24.

43 See, for example, the discussion between Grosz and Spivak, "Criticism, Feminism and the Institution," in Gayatri Spivak, *The Post-colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies and Dialogues* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), especially pp. 10-11.

44 Spivak, *In Other Worlds*, p. 150.

45 Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic*, p. 12.

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46 Rosi Braidotti, "The politics of ontological difference," in Teresa Brennan (ed.), *Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 93.

47 Jane Gallop, *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. xii.

48 Paul Smith, *Discerning the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 150.

49 Moi, p. 8.

50 Grosz, *Jacques Lacan*, p. 149.

51 See Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (trans.) Margaret Waller (intro.) Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 40 for discussion of this term.

52 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (trans.) Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 13.

53 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 72.

54 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 13.

55 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 102.

56 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 72.

57 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 2.

58 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 4.

59 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 19.

60 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 71.

61 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 71.

62 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 72.

63 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 79.

64 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 80.

65 Elizabeth Jolley, *The Well* (1986; Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1987).

66 Joan Kirkby, "The Call of the Mother in the Fiction of Elizabeth Jolley," *SPAN*, 26 (1988), p. 61.

67 See Irigaray, "Women's Exile," p. 76.

68 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 103.

69 Veronica Brady, "'Speaking From Where She Is Not' . . . *The Well* and *My Father's Moon*," in Delys Bird and Brenda Walker (eds), *Elizabeth Jolley: New Critical Essays* (North Ryde: CollinsAngus & Robertson, 1991), p. 52.

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- 70 It may reach back further than this, as it is mentioned that Hester leaves her father's companionship for Hilde's.
- 71 Joan Kirkby, "The Joseph Complex or the Father/Daughter Bond in the Fiction of Elizabeth Jolley," in Bird and Walker (eds), p. 69.
- 72 Gallop, p. 70-71.
- 73 Kirkby, in Bird and Walker (eds), p. 70.
- 74 Brady, in Bird and Walker (eds), p. 53.
- 75 A number of Jolley's works touch on the erotic relationship between teacher and student, not always but often both women. Sometimes these are represented as poignant or even ultimately tragic desires (see, for example, the relationship between Laura and Esmé Gollanberg in *Palomino*), and sometimes they are represented in terms of comic or absurd exploits (see *Miss Peabody's Inheritance*).
- 76 See Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, pp. 76-7.
- 77 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 6.
- 78 In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva argues that "He who denies morality is not abject; there can be grandeur in amorality and even in crime that flaunts its disrespect for the law -- rebellious, liberating, and suicidal crime. Abjection, on the other hand, is immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady: a terror that disassembles, a hatred that smiles, a passion that uses the body for barter instead of inflaming it, a debtor who sells you up, *a friend who stabs you....*" (p. 4; my emphasis. The full significance of this will be elaborated shortly.)
- 79 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 77.
- 80 In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva says "But it is the corpse -- like, more abstractly, money or the golden calf -- that takes on the abjection of waste in the biblical text" (p. 109). She has already explicated the abjection associated with the golden calf as follows: "Defilement will now be that which impinges on symbolic oneness, that is, sham, substitutions, doubles, idols. 'Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods' [Leviticus 19:4]," (p. 104).
- 81 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 78.
- 82 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 6; my emphasis.
- 83 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 72.
- 84 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 73.
- 85 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 12.
- 86 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 73.
- 87 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 73.
- 88 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 73. The relationship between abjection and the unconscious should be addressed at this point. Kristeva suggests that the dynamics of abjection "challenge[] the theory of the unconscious". She points out that  
     The theory of the unconscious . . . presupposes a repression of contents (affects and presentations) that, thereby, do not have access to consciousness but effect within the

subject modifications, either of speech (parapraxes, etc.), or of the body (symptoms), or both (hallucinations, etc.). . . .

Yet, facing the ab-ject . . . one might ask if those articulations of negativity germane to the unconscious . . . have not become inoperative. The 'unconscious' contents remain here *excluded* but in strange fashion: not radically enough to allow for a secure differentiation between subject and object, and yet clearly enough for a defensive *position* to be established" (*Powers of Horror*, p. 5).

However, a diachronic and substantive differentiation may be posited which enables the subject to be seen as subject to both abjection and the unconscious. Because the unconscious is formed upon entry into language and subjectivity, the conscious/unconscious distinction pertains to systems of representation. However, abjection precedes this, occurring with the first movements of separation from the maternal body. It is therefore before, and a precondition of, primary narcissism (which itself is a precondition of language, subjectivity and the unconscious). The abject returns, not from the unconscious, but from the more archaic semiotic space which precedes the binary division of inside/outside. The form of the return is not that of psychical representation/symptom, but is inseparable from the bodily drives. As Kristeva explains, for example, "A wound with blood and pus, or the sickly acrid smell of sweat, of decay, does not *signify* death. In the presence of signified death -- a flat encephalograph, for instance -- I would understand, react, or accept. No, as in true theater, without makeup or masks, refuse and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live" (*Powers of Horror*, p. 3). In Hester's case, she has repressed her desire for Hilde with the advent of the primary narcissism which accepts the prohibition of maternal incest in return for a place in the Symbolic. However, the abject separation from the maternal body (of Hilde) has been the precondition of this narcissism. Therefore, through the well, Hester is confronted not only with the maternal body but with the repressed memories/desires associated with it.

89 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 71.

90 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 77.

91 Grosz, *Sexual Subversions*, p. 77.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## THE ABJECTION OF (THE SUBJECT OF) SETTLER POST-COLONIALISM.

## 7. I. Introduction.

In Chapter Six, I read *The Well* as the narrative of Hester Harper's abjection. However, I now suggest that Hester's abjection is a parable of the abjection of settler post-colonialism. The novel, which we read through Hester's point of view, is set in Australia in the 1970s, but the sense of place *in itself* is vague, almost missing apart from (symptomatically) emblematic features such as 'roo bars' on her Toyota. The 'place' occupied by Hester, and represented in the novel, is instead a negotiation of the *heimlich* Other, the (M)other culture of Europe, associated with Hilde Herzfeld (who represents in her name the place to which Hester's heart belongs), but is now distant and lost; and the presence of American popular culture through the presence of Katherine -- an otherness already within, but strictly *unheimlich* for Hester. This is evoked in the co-extensiveness of a cultural with a generational gap, where the representation, through Hester, of Kathy's language and the attendant cultural phantasmagoria jars severely -- *produces* it as *unheimlich* -- while its necessity in order for Hester to be close to Kathy is unquestioned. There is little question, for Kathy, of locating herself within Hester's European cultural space. There is thus a certain directionality of influence suggested. Further, the 'time' of the novel is most clearly established with reference to popular American iconography such as disco and John Travolta. There is no particular sense of 'Australian time'. Hester therefore occupies an in-between space, a no-place (of her own) as she listens to German *lieder* and Beethoven string quartets, and with Kathy, throws plates and other household items down the well in orgies of consumer wastefulness suggestive of American-connoted marketing strategies which promote endless renewal and consumption.

Certainly the argument that Hester -- and by implication, Australia -- occupies 'no place', cannot secure her belonging, must be seen in the light of her designation as "the daughter of the largest surrounding landscape" (8), and as occupying a homestead known as "Harper's Place" (68). However, while she is the lawful inheritor of her father's position, she does not achieve a full accession to it. With her father's death, like the

passing of the rule of Empire, the guarantee of that (paternal) Law is now absent. As a result, the 'legitimacy' and security of her place becomes increasingly uncertain, and eventually she faces the loss of the majority of it (owing to her mismanagement), and retreats into an increasingly smaller and more defensive space. Threats to identity and security are projected as external in origin. However, the threat to Hester's -- Australia's -- identity and position is hybridity. I have argued that women's positions in patriarchy are either as 'migrant' to or as 'exile' in language, desire and subjectivity. Similarly, the settler-migrant and indigenous-exile are the only available partial-presences in relation to authenticity and identity, and as such they are always already partial absences. Hester's solution, as I have shown, is to renounce the platonic purity of subjectivity and to produce her discourse in contiguity with the body, a solution which holds instructive allegorical potential for settler post-colonial societies.

I now argue for a reading of settler post-colonialism in terms of abjection *against* understanding it as either the 'arrival' or even a coherent struggle towards some decolonised 'golden age' of true identity. This is not to deny the political necessity of such struggles, but to argue that even within the context of these, it would be a dangerous simplification to understand post-colonialism in terms of such a state of unified self-presence, self-identity, and autonomy, or even to specify a subject-position for or from which it speaks. To read the abjection of settler post-colonialism is to acknowledge, on the one hand, the threats to self-identity from inside that identity -- the multiple differences and differentiations which, characterised by Bhabha as the "supplementary space of cultural signification," may not 'add up', but rather "may disturb the calculation,"<sup>1</sup> which seeks the solution of the whole (and full) number of national oneness or cultural authenticity. The post-colonial nation is thus threatened with its always imminently apparent dismantling as the space of unified cultural discourse. On the other hand, the abjection of settler post-colonialism testifies to threats to identity from outside, Other nations, or cultural powers, against which post-colonial nations or cultural discourses defend. In the cases of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, cultural discourse has largely identified 'America' and 'Europe' as these external threats to cultural self-identity and autonomy, historical and cultural links pointing to the sources of perceived vulnerability.<sup>2</sup>

## 7. II. Against the Autonomy of Post-Colonialism: Post-Modernism as Interlocutor.

Opposing the prevalence of 'autonomous self-definition' as the characteristic mode or desire in cultural discourses of post-colonialism, I want to problematise the 'autonomy' of settler post-colonial culture by citing a reading of it *in relation to* post-modernism, and then to produce it, in difference from itself, *out of* further post-modern cultural analysis. It would be indisputable that 'post-colonialism' addresses issues of cultural difference; thus, the spirit of this way of proceeding is captured in Bhabha's statement that

The identity of cultural difference cannot . . . exist autonomously in relation to an object or a practice 'in-itself', for the identification of the subject of cultural discourse is dialogical or transferential in the style of psychoanalysis. It is constituted through the *locus* of the Other which suggests both that the object of identification is ambivalent, and, more significantly, that the agency of identification is never pure or holistic but always constituted in a process of substitution, displacement or projection.<sup>3</sup>

My procedure is not intended to suggest that post-colonialism and post-modernism are the same, however, but rather that post-colonial (and post-modern) cultural production occurs out of the *frisson* of encounters with Others.<sup>4</sup>

In a discussion which largely concerns post-modernism and post-modern cultural production, John Frow argues that

The concepts of the post-colonial and the post-modern are perhaps most consistently defined in terms of their difference from and their difficult and ambivalent resistance to modernity. It is a logic of periodization that ties them together, or more precisely a logic of anti-periodization, defining them emptily through a retrospective negation. Even so open-ended and paradoxical a conception of period, however (the 'post'), runs the usual dangers: of reducing a disparate set of political or cultural circumstances to a more or less unified temporality with an ultimately spiritual essence.<sup>5</sup>

Post-colonialism names a difficult and ambivalent resistance to colonialism, modernity understood to be the philosophical character of its temporality. Certainly colonisations have been an historical fact of centuries, even millenia, but 'modernity' could in such cases be understood 'anachronistically' as that philosophy which constructs



knowledge of cultural relativisms and hierarchies. Has any culture/nation colonised that did not perceive itself to be more 'advanced' (culturally or militarily) than its object? However, to return to Frow's warning, the work of the 'post' is to unify a *process* and form of *relations* -- colonisation and its cultural effect, colonialism -- into a discrete era which may be said to have been superceded, while also producing a successor which itself is discrete and unified. Both colonialism and post-colonialism are therefore understood to conflate subjectivities into the one expression of their homogeneous essence; (paradoxically this essence may be 'plurality'). Indeed, 'colonialism' and 'post-colonialism' are produced *as* fully present subjectivities, sites of the production of coherent discourse. However, post-colonialism names also the ambivalent resistance to colonialism because the 'post' suggests *both* succession *and* implication. The 'empty' definition which results produces post-colonialism as an uncanny repetition of colonialism. It gives rise to what Slemon has termed the 'scramble for post-colonialism,'<sup>6</sup> in which, as 'empty object', it is invested libidinally and interestedly with meaning or content. Post-colonialism becomes both the sign and the object of desire in competing claims to (its) self-identity.

The contradiction of post-colonialism as both successor to and implicated in colonialism may be further explicated in consideration of both temporality and terrain as the constitutive 'spaces' of post-colonial definition. As I have pointed out, I attempt this through a reading out of the *difference* of Frow's discussion of post-modernism. In considering the problems of a purely temporal understanding of post-modernism, Frow argues,

The temporality of modernism requires its own obsolescence: a modernism that failed to age, that didn't demand to be superceded, would be a contradiction in terms. Hence the necessity of a successor to modernism, but hence also its definition solely in chronological form ('post') which refuses all indications of content. The paradoxical result of this is that, since this 'post' must be a real *alternative* to modernism, it must be based upon a different temporality: not that of novation but that of stasis. . . . In its determination to *succeed* modernism, however, it corresponds entirely to a modernist logic. . . . As Lyotard notes, we may suspect today that this 'break' is more like a repression (that is, a repetition of the past than it is an overcoming of it.<sup>7</sup>

While post-modernism is generally understood in an immediate relation to modernism (succession, negation, logical and/or chronological continuity), and while some post-colonial critics posit the post-colonial as the immediate successor of the colonial, I have argued throughout this thesis for the efficacy of specifying, in relation to settler post-colonial societies, a National phase which precedes post-colonialism as response to Empire, delaying but also influencing the terms of the emergence of post-colonialism. There is thus a split temporality of response to Empire, already contained within the putatively unified project of colonialism (a split whose character may have bearing on the modernism/post-modernism problematic). Of course this is not strictly a discrete and chronological separation, and may instead be an epistemic one.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless it is useful to note that in white settler societies which quickly established numerical, cultural and institutional dominance of British forms over indigenous populations and cultures, Nationalism, as a response to Empire, rather than constituting a clear movement of decolonisation, has been doubly implicated in that same Empire. Settler colonialism requires the advent of nationalism as the mark of its success. As such, colonisation as a process is succeeded by Nation as product. The 'new' society settles; novation becomes stasis. The 'new' society is, however, intrinsic to the logic and the relations of the project of colonisation. Colonial society is simply legitimated in this Nationhood, so the need for an alternative has not been fulfilled. Yet the entrance of post-colonialism has already been prepared by the vulnerability of the fictions which instituted and sustained Nationhood. As Bhabha notes, "Renan argues that the non-naturalist principle of the modern nation is represented in the *will* to nationhood -- not in the identities of race, language, or territory. It is the will that unifies historical memory and secures present-day consent."<sup>9</sup> Bhabha investigates the implications of Renan's characterisation of the nation as "'a daily plebiscite,'" and discovers the "'partial identification'" inscribed in it which "represents the performative discourse of the people": "Renan's pedagogical return to the will to nationhood is both constituted and confronted by the circulation of numbers in the plebiscite which break down the identity of the will -- it is an instance of the supplementary that 'adds to' without 'adding up.'"<sup>10</sup> It is this proliferation of multiple and competing -- incompatible -- expressions of the 'will to nation' within settler post-colonial societies, and

the discourses they invoke in order to frame them, that I address throughout this discussion.

However, the revolutionary optimism suggested by a name that claims to denote succession and supercession is at the same time disturbed by the 'reactionary' reference back to colonialism. Again, process looks to become product, journey to arrival, dislocation to return. In a sense, then, 'post-colonialism' promises a resolution of colonialism even more final than Nation. Yet post-colonialism could be argued to constitute a re-playing of the colonial scene of (mis)recognition of cultural difference (as opposed to Nation's disavowal) -- although 'nation' is also a principle site of the articulation of post-colonialism.

If temporality cannot produce post-colonialism as a radical alternative to colonialism, is difference a matter of terrain? Frow suggests that

having reached the point of absolute aporia, having taken the exploration of the material to its end, the modernist project becomes both complete and irrelevant. The intervention of post-modernism at this point would not involve a linear succession but a change of ground. Losing faith in both the purity and the futility of modernist practice, post-modernism takes up the discarded or marginalized materials of modernism . . . and exploits them with a quite different kind of rigour.<sup>11</sup>

There is a familiar understanding of post-colonialism as naming culture and cultural production grounded in the indigenous cultural materials marginalised by colonialism, and relegated by Nation to the position of the spoken object rather than speaking subject. Indeed, post-colonialism may further be recognised to speak more generally from the position of Nation's Others. Yet these Others within are also those who have (been) identified inter-nationally in various liberation and social movements, so that "we cannot contextualize the emergent cultural form by explaining it in terms of some pre-given discursive causality or origin [e.g. colonialism]. We must always keep open a supplementary space for the articulation of cultural knowledges that are adjacent and adjunct, but not necessarily accumulative, teleological, or dialectical," one which militates against the "implicit generalization of knowledge."<sup>12</sup> I have negotiated these inside-outside sources of the activist problematisation of Nation throughout this thesis, in considering the articulation of indigenous subjectivities and, for example, those of women, working-class, and migrant groups. This is not

to imply that the latter are purely external to Nation, but rather that their (self-)recognition as oppressed and resistant groups does not depend upon a prior history of settler-colonialism, but is the product of the settler post-colonial society's insertion into inter-national politics. Indeed, while the rationale for indigenous resistance belongs to the history of colonialism, its forms are mediated by the international circulation of other racial/cultural liberation movements which emerge from different histories into a shared present. The impact of such 'externalities' to the rubric of (post-) colonialism produces a post-colonialism which locates an interventionist positionality into the dominant discourses of National culture and identity.

However, an even further degree of complexity begins to emerge in analysis of settler post-colonialism when it is recognised that whenever the 'identity' or 'strategies' of (post-)colonialism are specified, there is the suggestion of either their undifferentiated, or privileged (authentic), subjectivities. Instead, it is necessary to ask what it *means* to take up and exploit the marginalised materials of colonialism. For example, when the dominant culture, in need of legitimation, takes up colonialism's marginalised materials, is the effect not quite different from when the oppositional/resistant subject confronts the dominant culture with them, and thus with precisely the problem of the latter's (il)legitimacy? Positionality -- the discursive space occupied by the subject of discourse -- is therefore a constituent of meaning. On the other hand, even if these are identified as different and competing moments of post-colonialism, it cannot be simply a matter of specifying 'complicit' and 'oppositional' post-colonialisms,<sup>13</sup> as if such positionalities were available -- viable -- in their essence and autonomy. As I have shown throughout the thesis, 'oppositional' post-colonialisms must use strategies which are, to some extent, 'complicit' with dominant cultural and discursive forms, while 'complicit' post-colonialisms attain precisely this status in part through their post-colonising manœuvre into 'oppositional' space, seeking their legitimation through the appropriation of the very materials marginalised in colonialism. Further, however, both 'returns' to the terrain of colonialism's marginalised are conditioned by their belated temporality, signifying an irrecoverable departure from origins which relegates (new) beginnings to the problematic of *hybridity*: those objects taken up -- remembered -- are the (mis)recognised objects of colonial hybridity produced out of the temporal and spatial dislocations of identity and

presence, in *différance*. Their recuperation in the project of cultural or national legitimation requires the disavowal of an historical gap, similar to the disavowal of the space and time between insemination and knowledge of conception which underwrites the (un)certainly of legitimacy. As Bhabha notes, Renan's 'will to nationhood' is "the site of a strange forgetting of the history of the nation's past: the violence involved in establishing the nation's writ. It is this forgetting -- a minus in the origin -- that constitutes the beginning of the nation's narrative." He continues: "It is through this syntax of forgetting -- or being obliged to forget -- that the problematic identification of a national people becomes visible," and further that it entirely changes "our understanding of the pastness of the past, and the unified present of the will to nationhood."<sup>14</sup> Post-colonialism must therefore be seen as produced in difference within itself, in deferral of its presence, and in difference from, and thus in relation to, (the site of) the Other; in short, in hybridity.

As this discussion has shown, attempts to 'unravel' settler post-colonialism have demonstrated the impingement of space upon temporality, and of temporality upon space, in its constitution. In this, it suggests the similarly irresolvable spatio-temporality, the movement, of abjection. Neither 'element' adequately addresses the complexity of post-colonialism, yet nor does it conform to the synthesis of their dialectical pairing. Rather, like abjection, it represents a ceaseless movement between them which is, in Frow's formulation for a different context, "so rapid as to resemble a vertiginous stasis."<sup>15</sup>

Abjection evokes a space-time of subjectivities, relations and discourses produced in difficulty, agonism and ambivalence. Post-colonialism cannot be defined in itself, in its 'purity', but rather in its *impurity*. The difficulty and ambivalence of its discourses arise partly because it is a repetition of colonial relations on different terrain. Just as the abjection of the subject is a repetition of the difficult and ambivalent work of initial separation-into-being -- being founded on loss -- and thus refers to pre-subjective time to which the subject is always in danger of returning, post-colonialism replays the colonial scene of (mis)recognition in a different temporality, appearing as stasis, 'before' and 'after' Nation's disavowal; as the Other. Post-colonialism's abjection names the impurity of its constitutive multiple, shifting and complex positionalities in the context of the return and recognition of hybridity, disavowed by National

authority, to its dominant discourses and valorised subject-positions. Indeed, abjection may be understood as the *effect* and *affect* of the recognition of hybridity, of constitutive contamination. The subjectivities of settler post-colonialism are thus located on the borders of identity and difference, presence and deferral, authority and disturbance. Frow's 'vertiginous stasis' is that dizzy, even nauseating space from which post-colonial discourses assert their presence -- spatially to themselves, and temporally to the latest moment -- but between whose poles such discourse is always just about to disappear.

However, lest this should seem like unremittingly bad news for interested readings of post-colonialism, pointing to the claim for abandonment of its projects and struggles, to sink into political quietism and indifference, let me assert that this is not necessarily the implication at all. After all, to invoke abjection is also to invoke its contextualisation as an affect/effect of phallogentric subjectivity, with its valorisation of subjective unity and purity at the expense of (bodily) heterogeneity. Therefore, the reading of settler post-colonialism as abjection should be seen to imply the possibility and the need to change the grounds of intervention, not to abandon it. In such a project, questions of (self-) knowledge and of relations, rather than identity, become paramount. I posit abjection as suggestive of a space of intervention and agency, a different place from which to speak.

I have shown that the subject is compromised by threats to identity from 'inside' and from 'outside', the different 'sources' of the abject. Provisionally positing 'post-colonialism' as such a subject allows these sources of threat to be examined. In the following discussion I analyse the threats to post-colonial identity from 'inside' in terms of the Mother-land/maternal continent configuration of discourses.

### 7. III. Against the Integrity of Post-Colonialism: The Mother-land as *Différance*

In Chapters Two and Three I discussed the problematic desire for authentication and identity enacted in and through fictional and other textual inscriptions of the landscape. In considering settler post-colonial discourses of the land as instantiating a form of the abjection of these nations or cultures, I necessarily address the role of the land as a threat to identity, even as it functions in the assertion of identity. The land may be

seen to comprise a threat to identity from within that identity in the sense that both identity-as-a-construct and its dominant national or cultural forms have been predicated on particular relations to the land, converging in their shared privileging of the masculine subject which, posited as 'self', casts the feminine as 'Other', and the 'Other' as feminine.

7. III. (i). **Colonisation.** The centrality of land to cultural identity in settler post-colonial societies is an inheritance of colonisation/colonialism itself. It is the land which calls colonial subjects into being, establishing their relative inside-outside positionalities. However, 'abjection' points to the problematic relation of the (masculine) subject to the maternal body. Settler post-colonial nations inherit specifically inflected significances of the expression 'mother-land' through colonial histories. These histories, like phallogentric subjectivity, are predicated on separations and discontinuities rather than continuity. Thus they render concepts such as abjection and oedipalisation useful in analysis of the developments of cultural discourses of 'identity', as they suggest problematic and unresolved relations to, and positionings of, the 'maternal continent'. At this point two caveats are needed: in this discussion, 'land' must inevitably refer to discourses of the land, while the heterogeneity of possible discourses constitutes the 'body' -- the excess -- invoked in the concept of abjection. I do not refer to any unmediated land-in-the-Real. Secondly, to suggest the land as a source of abjection for settler post-colonial cultures is not to valorise discourses of the land-as-mother, whether the threatening, engulfing mother, or the nurturing, sustaining mother. Rather, I acknowledge this as implicit in dominant discursive constructions of the land and by implication of the subjects of such discourses, *and* -- differently -- in the counter-discourses of the dominant culture's Others. Rather, I analyse and critique their implications for subject-positioning, as these emerge in the post-colonial 'return' of the repressed heterogeneity of land discourses which bid for, and problematise, identity and legitimacy.

Colonisation and colonial status cannot coherently be submitted to an account of a process which runs 'abjection-narcissism-oedipalisation-repression-subjectivity'. They exhibit a symptomatic excess over such an account, with its 'will-to-naturalisation'. However, this does not negate the usefulness of the analogy with a diachronic outline of the attainment of subjectivity. On the one hand it affirms the belief that historical and

political events are not 'natural', while on the other hand it may be used strategically to elucidate the functioning of attendant discourses to *naturalise* such events and relations (while these could be argued to have been complicit in the naturalisation of certain subjective processes and morphologies). Discourses of national identity constitute the clearest claims to a Natural National Self, an authentic and authoritative -- legitimate (therein the symptomatic contradiction!) -- speaking position in relation to culture. In positing this as analogous to the attainment of phallogentric subjectivity, it is possible to look back to the implied processes which preceded and projected it, and forward to its implications, the reinscribed returns of what was 'originally' repressed.

Colonisation as a process may be understood as either or both abjection and oedipalisation. In relation to settler colonies, colonial or settler identities require the prior separation from the maternal continent of Britain. There is a certain irony in the suggestion that numbers of settler groups represented the expelled excess, or the abject, of an ideal British *corps-propre*: through the rims of economy came the poor, and the population overflow; through those of the law came criminals; and through those of state authority came political dissidents and trouble-makers. Each of these rims, it should be noted, was overdetermined by the others.<sup>16</sup> However, this separation is also necessary to the production of the separate colonial-settler body, which enables the narcissism which in turn is the precondition of the subject. Further, colonial status, with its differential positionalities produced in the colonial encounter with the Other, locates the 'bodily rims' of incorporation and expulsion traversed by the abject, and which will define the separate 'infant body' of the colony, and will later become the erotogenic zones -- zones of (discourses of) fear and desire. The rims of temporality and history are traversed by discourses of origins and legitimacy; spatiality and positionality by those of belonging and authenticity; and of politics and discourse by authority and mastery. All of these must be understood as inseparable and as constitutively enmeshed.<sup>17</sup>

To allude to the colonial encounter is to recall the crucial and constitutive fact that colonisation is not an intransitive, nor even a simply self-reflexive process (though critical analysis may represent self-reflexivity as one of its oppressive moments). For example, I have argued an analogy, in relation to Australia, Canada and New Zealand, between the colonial



and the mirror encounters, and their privileging of images of 'sameness', so that the coloniser must struggle to expel the excess of the real body upon which the colony is located -- that is, the *otherness* of the colonial *land* -- in order to attain the ideal, white, western body of Empire. On the other hand, to compare colonisation with oedipalisation serves as a reminder that the compensation, or 'reward', for that separation from the maternal continent, and from bodily-continuity towards an image, is the accession to a subjective position through the Name/Law of the Symbolic/Father. Colonisation constitutes a masculine relation to the land: it entails the oedipal abandonment of the British 'motherland' to accede to the Symbolic position of possessor of another land. However, while gaining the subjective, 'lawful' right, in terms of Imperial relations, to another land, the legacy is an unresolved ambivalence towards the maternal body. Nostalgia for the motherland casts the colonial land as mother-substitute, whose specificity is the object of repression -- and suppression -- in the project of settlement. However, as this mother-substitute, this 'new' land inherits the same ambivalence which the Imperial mother evoked. As the nurturing, sustaining mother, it has 'called into being' the 'identity' of the settler; it has 'seduced' the coloniser, for whom it is an object of desire. For example, in her extended study of the Australian land as inscribed in discourses of desire, Kay Schaffer has pointed out that "the idea of Australia has a long history as a land of desire, traversed in the imaginations of explorers, settlers and visitors alike."<sup>18</sup> But as the threatening, engulfing mother, the dependence on the land threatens the autonomy of colonial-settler identity, and the land is perceived as hostile, needing to be tamed and contained: "Landscape looms large in the Australian imaginary, although its infinite variety has been reduced to a rather singular vision -- the Interior, the outback, the red centre, the dead heart, the desert, a wasteland. . . . [I]n Australia the fantasy of the land as mother is one which is particularly harsh, relentless and unforgiving." Thus, the bush "becomes the space in which the native son plays out his primal fear of and love for the mother."<sup>19</sup> One of the constitutive psychic fears of abjection is that of engulfment or absorption. Schaffer refers to the powerful fantasy in Australia of "the power of the bush, like the fantasy of the primal mother, to suck up its inhabitants, assimilating them into its contours and robbing them of a separate identity."<sup>20</sup> While the weight and persistence, or rather, insistence, of such fantasies would vary between each of the settler colonies, the psychic identification of the land as

maternal body, and the projection of primal ambivalence holds, I believe, for cultural discourses in each of Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

The masculine relation of 'settler' to the land 'feminises' the land itself, defining it as the Other to be possessed and controlled, the accomplishment of which enterprise affirms the mastery of the settler. However, the Other is not a term which denotes specificity of identity, but positionality. It is the not-Self, the external support of the Self, and in the colonial context conflates everything that is not the privileged masculine colonising subject. Thus, again in the context of Australia, but relevant to all three colonies, "History comes to be seen as the valorized achievement of man over Nature. Nature is the raw material providing a passive context for (white) man's activities. The Aboriginal peoples become absorbed into the context of Nature. Their presence is repressed."<sup>21</sup> Similarly, the separation of indigenous people from their traditional cultural relation to the land by the process of colonisation casts them in a 'feminine' relation to the land. They remain in a kind of contiguity with it as their 'first continent', but as such are always about to be reabsorbed, to signify the land itself, for the colonising subject. While remaining to an extent 'in touch' with the land, the relation of indigenous peoples to it is mediated by a foreign Symbolic, while to the extent that they are 'in touch' with the land, they are excluded from that Symbolic.

At the same time, 'coloniser' or 'settler' as masculine subjectivities problematise the relationship of women to the land. If the land is 'Woman', how can the Symbolic articulate a relationship *between* 'real' women and the land? The paradox is that land as Woman renders it 'no place for a woman', the no-place of feminine subjectivity itself. In the context of an historical-sociological study of New Zealand masculinity, Jock Phillips has argued that the rise of urban and sedentary occupations in Britain had threatened the distinctions of masculinity and femininity, so that "Emigration provided a new confrontation with nature, a chance to face life in the raw, to show courage and physical strength. In the colonies one could feel a man once more."<sup>22</sup> Thus generally "Women have been considered to be absent in the bush and the nationalistic bush tradition. Yet they are constantly represented through the metaphors of landscape. Women carry the burden of metaphor."<sup>23</sup>

7. III. (ii). **Nationalism.** Through the violence of the colonial encounter -- a process, not an event, and one whose violence is not of course confined to, but refers to, the racism of the colonial gaze -- emerges the subject-position from which a *national identity* may be articulated. It is an identity founded on the mastery of the land through discourses which both repress and sublimate the abyss of abjection into which the National subject may fall. These discourses repress the heterogeneous difference of the land, containing questions of the spatial and temporal disturbances to the certainty of legitimacy inscribed in histories of separation, discontinuity, and the loss of origins. It is important that *other* discourses of the land are repressed: it cannot be admitted to National consciousness that "The white Australian bush, for example, is not the bush of the Aboriginal dreamtime which has sustained tribal life in the outback for over 40 000 years. . . . [that] the relationship of white Australians to the bush produces a very different bush from that of Aboriginal Australia."<sup>24</sup> Such knowledge would disturb the presence of white authority, the latter sustained in myths, images and representations of the landscape which sublimate the threat of abjection, and which inscribe the subject-position of masculine mastery over the feminine land. As I argued in Chapters One and Two, however, the production of myths of national identity as expressed in the heroic settler's mastery of the land, tended to be produced from within an urban context, a construction out of distance and difference. Indeed, as Brydon has noted, "the [Canadian] North functions for many non-Northerners as a final frontier,"<sup>25</sup> suggesting that the myths do not work for those who live there. Nevertheless, the function of such myths has been to authenticate the Nation, and dominant National subject, through their invocation of the primal, *original*, (maternal) significance of the land. Again, authenticity has tended to comprise the negation of difference, the disturbance or 'originality' contained or repressed by the isomorphism of the images produced, with the valorised National subject, so that they may only be spoken authentically by that subject. For example, consistent with the notion of land/the feminine body as the object of a rival exchange between men, Schaffer refers to battles for supremacy in, and over, the Australian bush. The 'squatter' was identified with *English* ruling class values; the 'selector' with *Irish* migrants and ex-convicts, so that the (white) 'native bushman' (a term which itself enacts discursive erasure of Aboriginality) emerged as the only authentic Australian, defined as such in part *against* the others.<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, she argues, "The land . . . is not only a metaphor for feminine otherness through which man attains a (precarious) identity but also a shifting site of battles -- moral, political, religious, economic -- invested and traversed by the relations of power/knowledge. Writers of authoritative texts, in their attempts to master knowledge, construct the land as an object and an instrument of power."<sup>27</sup>

In short, discourses of the land 'speak' the National subject. They include discourses of production, installing and legitimating a utilitarian conception of the 'right' to land ownership and control, founded in the early example of Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*:

'And hence subduing or cultivating the Earth, and having Dominion, we see are joined together. The one gave Title to the other. So that God, by commanding to subdue, gave Authority so far to *appropriate*. And the Condition of Humane Life, which requires Labour and materials to work on, necessarily introduces *private possessions*.'<sup>28</sup>

By contrast, Schaffer observes:

The Aborigine was not perceived as having rights of ownership in terms of the Lockean appropriation. In 1911 James Collier had written:

'[The Aborigine's] inability to till the ground or even make use of its natural pasture . . . was the capital offence, and it was irredeemable. . . . Their disappearance was a natural necessity. It came about in obedience to a natural law. It was effected by natural processes, and followed the lines of substitution of vegetal and animal species all over the world.'<sup>29</sup>

What is remarkable here, apart from the fact that "the concept of nature is employed in the cause of colonial conquest,"<sup>30</sup> is the force of the repression of the Aboriginal presence in the discursive construction of their absence -- the use of the past tense -- an absence which is as much a discursive 'necessity' as a socio-political one. Apart from discourses of productivity, the National subject, or Nation-as-subject, is spoken, for example, in discourses of defence -- the delineation of boundaries and autonomy -- and of the 'consumption' of the land in the tourist industry's production and marketing of attractive images and motifs of 'natural' landscape -- the land as 'trophy' for the masculine-nation's ego; the land as pornography!

'Other' discourses, those of women and migrants for example, are rendered inauthentic. The emergence of the 'national identity' may

therefore be likened to the erection of the phallic 'I', the 'self' whose passage through an historical-cultural mirror-stage confers the image of autonomy, unity, integrity and identity. In other words, it reflects the separation from the maternal continent -- Britain as cultural specificity; the land as the materiality and heterogeneity of discourses -- and projects a narcissistic investment in images of the whole and unique 'self', images of national identity. Yet the morphology of the 'national mirror' is such that it produces an image valued as autonomous, but valued on the basis of its specular similarity to British cultural and institutional *models*. Similarly, the mirror instigates 'masculine' and 'feminine' positions which reflect differential access to National subjectivity. Only the 'borrowed' or 'migrant' subjectivity of the female 'masculinity' complex is available to Nation's Others in the production or articulation of a counter-claim to discourses of the land.

The nation is therefore founded on a debt to the land, but the land remains problematic for it, just as the subject retains a problematic relation to the maternal body. National presence and authority are a frail legal fiction repressing the threatening 'beyond' of the abject. Like the abject, these Other discourses of the land cannot finally be contained. The very Law which attempts this containment attests to National anxiety regarding its legitimacy, regarding the return of maternal desire.

**7. III. (iii). Post-Colonialism.** In post-colonialism, National repression and sublimation have failed to contain discourses of the land within those forms which 'naturalise' its presence and authority. It is not that different and contestatory discourses are articulated for the first time, but that they cannot be prevented from impinging on and disturbing 'National consciousness'. The post-colonial proliferation of discourses problematises the basis of the National relationship to the land by confronting it with its own (inadmissible) excess. It represents a crisis in the transparency of authority -- the 'fit' of National image with site of articulation -- and the reappearance of the political opacity of the socio-Symbolic. Post-colonialism is marked, for example, by the emergence of discourses which privilege the indigenous relation to the land, threatening 'national identity' from within. In such discourses, land is understood as the basis of indigenous identity and subjectivity, and the relation is predicated, not on distance and mastery, but on contiguity. 'Originality' is claimed as ethical priority, challenging the basis of settler identity founded in the loss

of origins and the discourse of heroic beginnings. For example, in *The Temptations of Big Bear*, Big Bear and his people are described as having lived, before the treaties which Symbolised the relation to the land, in the undifferentiated landscape of a maternal cultural *chora*. They experienced no boundaries between the land and themselves, but rode "wherever their eyes touched land" (350; my emphasis). Similarly, the imagery associated with the landscape, which I argued in Chapter Three to be that of the female body, may now be specified as the maternal body, with references to "rounded bellies" (134), "sagging belly" (331), and "nipple" (162). In discussion of *My Place*, I showed that the land represented, for Sally and her family, an original space of belonging, associated with idyllic childhood memories which again suggest the *chora*. However, just as the Symbolic Father breaks up this corporeal bond, it was in childhood that many Aboriginal people, including members of Sally's family, were separated from both their mothers and the land to which they belonged, by the paternal-Symbolic Law of the Nation. Thus 'mother' and 'land' were shown to be linked in the Aboriginal child's archaic origin. Sally's desire to return to the birth-place of her family (see 214), represents the attempt to acknowledge and regain the maternal-bodily relation to the land as the source of 'true' (matrilocal -- in the locus of the mother) post-colonial identity. Further, the motif of uncertain paternity which pervades the text may be seen to be emblematic of the post-colonial condition as one of problematised cultural legitimacy, of the lapse of the secure hold of the paternal function over maternal desire -- of the abjection of the subject.

The post-colonial discursive situation cannot be reduced to the mutual antagonism of 'claim' and 'counter-claim'; indeed, there is a simplification in the very term 'counter-discourse' if it is the discourse itself which is understood as purely oppositional. Rather, discourses are not so pure or autonomous. In their valorisation of the body of the land, of the authenticity of origins, of cultural continuity and belonging, post-colonial counter-discourses offer to Nation that promise of *origin*-al desire (for the Mother, for origins), about which the subjects of the dominant Nation-al discourse had been anxious since the Symbolic alienation of Nation raised the spectre of uncertain legitimacy. On the other hand, even post-colonised literary evocations of a cultural land-*chora* are Symbolised in textual form, and are thus vulnerable to (re-)appropriation by the post-colonising desire to (re-)establish the *true body* of Nation. The logic is something like, 'if the nation cannot be *original*, then at least it can be

*indigenous*'. The project becomes one of producing the simulacra of indigeneity, for the 'true body' is always a contradiction in terms: the 'true' belongs to the order of the legitimate, the proper, and the autonomous; the 'body' belongs to that of excess, of polymorphous perversity, of *jouissance*. Therefore, post-colonial national desire for legitimation (the 'true') by incorporating indigenous discourses of originality (the 'body') opens a discursive abyss into which 'national' and 'cultural' subjectivities are always about to fall -- the nation is engulfed by an impossible excess, and indigenous discourses are alienated in the National Symbolic.

This hybrid contamination of discourses and subjectivities is not a new feature, the belated advent of post-colonialism. It is instigated and disavowed in the earliest moments of colonial encounter, and repressed by 'National consciousness'. It returns, however, to abject the subject in post-colonialism, where land -- the colonial issue -- is reinscribed differently in the post-colonial politics of identity. These political discourses are located on the inside-outside rims of the desires/fears they articulate. Thus part of the issue is that the dominant discourse (which has repressed the implications of a prior and superior indigenous claim to the land) appropriates the terms of this repressed discourse in the interests of securing an *original* relation to the land; while indigenous discourses seeking to regain their original relation must do so by bringing this claim to the 'consciousness' of the nation through the attainment of a subjectivity within the national Symbolic. 'Originality' is therefore paradoxically alienated in the very necessity of its articulation. In other words, post-colonial discourses of the land -- ambivalently signifying desires and fears -- traverse the rims -- zones of contention -- on the 'body' of national culture.

It is now useful to return to the formulation I outlined earlier in relation to the colonial encounter, filling in the circulation of post-colonial discursive impulses in relation to identity and the land. The following table illustrates the colonial disturbance of both temporal and spatial constituents of subjectivity, producing the (post-)colonial subjective *Entstellung* which abjects discourses of identity.

## A Schematic Representation of the Abjection of the Subject of Settler Post-Colonial Discourse

### Erotogenic Zone.

#### Temporality/History.

This refers to the potency in (post)colonial cultural and political discourse of the problem of beginnings and endings.

#### Spatiality/Positionality.

Presence is both temporal and spatial, and the latter 'zone' is traversed as the question of presence and absence, and relative positioning -- 'here' and 'there'.

#### Politics/Discourse.

Belonging is both positional and possessive (political). In the relative inscriptions of 'self' and 'other' in discourse, these discourses must confront their production through the locus of the Other -- their hybridity, their *différance*.

### Discourses of Fear and Desire.

#### Origins/Legitimacy.

Post-colonial discourses desire, but cannot attain both of these: each has either been lost (is in the past), or has not yet been gained (is in the future). Thus presence -- and a present which would elide the problem of history -- eludes them.

#### Authenticity/Belonging.

Post-colonial discourses invoke the land as guarantor and measure of identity (continuity with place or position), and a sense of the specificity of place.

#### Authority/Subjectivity.

Post-colonial discourses desire the articulation of a subjectivity which will enable the production of historical and spatial continuity -- that is, to narrativise belonging - - but each is necessarily born out of subjectivity discontinuity, both spatial and temporal.



The implication of each of these components in the others, and their endless circulation around and through each other, conveys something of the hybridity of post-colonial discourses of the land, its modes of signification and substantive significance. The contamination of one by another points to the inability of the National Symbolic to repress or sublimate its disturbed authority, and of indigenous discourses to elide their loss of 'originality'. The 'subject' is inevitably *spoken* through both.

In this abject condition of post-colonial subjective hybridity, how can the temptation to -- or imposition of -- a cynical political indifference be avoided? Brydon describes her use of the term 'contamination', to characterise post-colonial literary discourses in Canada, as 'polemical.'<sup>31</sup> However, I wish to grant it more than polemical value; I use it to invoke a descriptive, evocatively affective value which goes some way towards suggesting the abjection of the post-colonial subject, not to negate politics, but to re-locate and re-energise them. This requires the recognition that the phallogentric subject of identity, not despite but partly because of its alienation in language, is problematically predicated on the purity which signifies distance from corporeality and heterogeneity, from the body as the site of traversal of contradictory drives and networks of power. As Hodge and Mishra argue of what they term the "racist complex," but which could be argued of the whole structure of National authority in the (post-) colonial context,

we need . . . to locate its point of weakness and insecurity and deconstruct its obsessive claims to monolithic unity. The point of weakness is also the site of its most massive investment of energies: the role of the concept of purity in an impossible enterprise of legitimation. . . .

. . . . The price of purity is that the anomalous becomes the focus of energy in the system, which seeks to contain and deny the impurity that would destroy its constitutive principles. The impure, the hybrid, the bastard, are such threats to the system that they become taboo, objects of excessive hatred and disgust. But at the same time they are disturbingly attractive, the locus of pleasure and power, where change and growth are still possible.<sup>32</sup>

The options for asserting purity in the face of its compromise include the suppression of difference, or a reactionary absorption into the otherness offered by the dominant discourse. But even these are ultimately untenable as positions of 'purity'. They are positions of disavowal which reinscribe the forces they resist, and which in fact

underwrite the cynical indifference of discourses of cultural politics or in the politics of cultural production, and circulate through cultures as cultural/discursive relativism and pluralism. For example, 'purity' may be used by dominant interests against those that threaten them. Referring to Aboriginal indeterminacy regarding the boundaries of sacred sites, Ken Gelder argues that

Those anthropologists and consultants who would 'fix' the boundaries of Aboriginal sites play into the hands of mining companies (if they are not employed by them already) who wait in the wings to move into legitimized areas. To promote the indeterminacy of the boundaries of a sacred site certainly frustrates this ambition -- although it has its own hazards for Aboriginal communities, too. Mining companies exploit this indeterminacy by challenging the authenticity of a claim -- and, it follows, the very 'essence' of the sacred. This is postmodernism in its more reactionary guise: A mining company discredits Aboriginal authenticity to make its own claims appear authentic. Aboriginal communities, on the other hand, exploit indeterminacy in order at the very least to defer the claims on and about them by mining companies. . . . This may be postmodernism in its more revolutionary manifestation.<sup>33</sup>

This analysis illustrates the point made by Hodge and Mishra that purity becomes the site of the most massive investment of energies in cultural and political discourse. Further, such condemnation of Aboriginal land claims to the status of inauthenticity is only possible from within the belief of the dominant discourse in the purity of its own speaking-position. Thus the urgency of problematising the conflation of authenticity with subjective purity and the disavowal of the hybridity of the (post-)colonial subject this entails, is clear.

A different danger -- that of an uncritical appropriation of dominant discursive forms in gestures of mimicry by Nation's Others, is exemplified in a number of Elizabeth Jolley's texts discussed in Chapter Three: the woman as 'migrant subject', in which borrowed 'masculine' positions in relation to the land -- possession, mastery, and sublimation -- reflect exploitative or 'colonising' relationships between women; the touristic consumption of landscapes, idealising responses which are deflated by physical proximity to, or contact with, the land; and the appropriation of the traditional masculine wealthy subject of land ownership. While Jolley demonstrates the dangers of discourse predicated on an impossible disavowal of difference -- the feminine accession to phallocentric

subjectivity -- as being precisely the reinscription of colonising relations, and while she is (usually) critical of these reinscriptions, her insistence on women who speak and write the land does not address how both women and land may be differently inscribed in discourse.

The problem of absorption into otherness in order to protect the integrity of cultural difference lies in the political indifference of cultural relativism, which actually strengthens the legitimacy of the status quo. Diana Brydon asks, "Whose interests are served by . . . retreat into preserving an untainted authenticity? Not the native groups seeking land rights and political power."<sup>34</sup> In relation to women as Others of the valorised masculine National subject, Schaffer is critical of those who "depict the land, in defiance of the tradition, as a loving, mysterious, powerful and positive force," as inversions of patriarchal ideology: "These writers complete the masculine representations by filling in the missing content -- the other side."<sup>35</sup> Aritha Van Herk's *The Tent Peg* might be read as just such an inversion of a patriarchal myth, the identification of woman with the land, appropriating its full ambivalence in order to critique masculine distance from the land by positing an *essentially* closer relationship between it and women. However, while this constitutes a moment of the novel's articulation, the relationship to the land exemplified by J.L. is one which is critical of the land-mother myth, even in its benign guise. Through J.L., the novel is critical of patriarchal arrogance and a subjective morphology which can only perceive others in relation to the self, a position from which it claims mastery and autonomy.

Post-colonial discourses and post-colonial cultures are abject to the extent that they attempt to articulate 'truth', 'authenticity', and 'identity' according to a phallogentric morphology, within the contaminated space of dislocation and belatedness. Provisionally to invoke an idealist separation between the following terms, cultural-discursive tension arises, not out of their contamination *as such*, but in relation to the claims to authenticity and the attempts to retain an authoritative (National) subjectivity -- a position from which to speak a (national) identity -- which necessarily are articulated in post-colonial societies. While post-colonial discourse has been described by Brydon as seeking "a way to define differences that do not depend on myths of cultural purity or authenticity but that thrive on an interaction that 'contaminates' without homogenizing,"<sup>36</sup> she concedes that "While post-colonial theorists embrace hybridity and heterogeneity as

the characteristic post-colonial mode, some native writers in Canada resist what they see as a violating appropriation to insist on their ownership of their stories and their exclusive claim to an authenticity that should not be ventriloquised or parodied."<sup>37</sup> Similarly, it has been argued that "Whatever its limitations, national identity is often the only shield the colonized have against the peremptory characterizations of the colonizer."<sup>38</sup> It would be reductive to argue too easily that post-colonial discourses celebrate cultural-discursive contamination; constituent discourses are rarely so tolerant of competing claims to its highly interested and libidinal terms. Rather, post-colonialism comprises discourses *through which* their contamination is inadvertently and abjectly spoken.

Broadly speaking, settler post-colonial discourses of the land negotiate indigenous land-claims, discourses of National authority and legitimation, and the constellation of discourses around national autonomy and identity. Each of these comprises varying combinations of discursive mode or authority: the sacred, traditional, historical, economic (productivity and consumption), conservation, social justice, defence, and more. Land is a 'right', a resource, self-definition, a link between past and present, a text, and so on. An article in *The Weekend Australian* illustrates the abject confusion of discourses and significations in the post-colonial context.<sup>39</sup> I quote it almost in its entirety in order to present as many examples of such discursive contamination as possible, and have underlined what I consider to be key examples, providing some commentary on conflicts and paradoxes.

### 7. III. (iv). Conflict between social justice and preservation of the environment.

#### Greens divided on Aboriginal land rights.

The fight by Aborigines for the right to hunt in national parks holds the promise that ancient skills will be kept alive. But it is also threatening some of the most enduring alliances of the conservation movement.<sup>1</sup>

David Buchanan, Jamie Bogle and Warren Kerr are Kuku Yalanji tribesmen who escort paying tourists through tribal rainforest next to Mossman Gorge National Park in North Queensland, where they demonstrate traditional hunting rituals using spears and boomerangs and supplement their grocery shopping.<sup>2</sup>

Like many Queensland Aborigines, they believe an extension of their hunting rights into national parks -- made possible under the State's new Aboriginal Land Act -- would soothe the wounds of white settlement.<sup>3</sup>

Some in the environment movement concur with this view and equate the importance of social justice with that of environmental preservation.<sup>4</sup> But others shudder at the prospect of the pursuit of traditional food sources on traditional land with guns, four-wheel drive vehicles and outboard motors.<sup>5</sup>

So, amid a shower of insults such as "green redneck racist" and "conservationists captured by guilt", alliances built on the bold campaign against a road through the Daintree rainforest in the early 1980s are crumbling.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tradition and conservation are often politically and discursively linked in discourses of preservation, but here they are divided by incompatible ideas of what should be preserved, and how such preservation should be undertaken.

<sup>2</sup> Tradition, the object of preservation, has already been turned into consumer item -- tourist entertainment -- which is paradoxically symptomatic of the basis of the social and economic changes which have generated the need for concern about preservation of traditions, and the means by which this is being sought. The irony is sustained by the observation that 'tradition' is also put to the utilitarian purpose, by the tribesmen, of supplementing their livelihood within, rather than independent of, the dominant cash economy. I do not make this point to be critical of the strategies of the Aboriginal tribesmen, but simply to emphasise the post-colonial strategic and discursive hybridity.

<sup>3</sup> At this point, discourses of tradition and economic livelihood as the basis of hunting rights claims are located within a post-colonial discourse of *social justice* in relation to a history of colonial oppression.

<sup>4</sup> Social justice is equated with environmental preservation, but even the expression of their equality occurs within a discourse which already assumes their fundamental separateness.

<sup>5</sup> In this discourse, 'tradition' is invoked by the dominant culture as a tool of social and political suppression of hunting rights claims, and the perpetuation of colonial power relations with regard to land rights. Paradoxically, the very accession to (the technologies of) modernity, posited as the means to subject-status within the nation, is used to de-authenticate and disqualify their claims.

<sup>6</sup> Post-colonialism cannot unproblematically be characterised as a tolerant pluralism of social and political discourses, even among those who would contest major industrial and

Conservationists supportive of hunting rights say that Aborigines practised sound land management before white settlement<sup>1</sup> and that non-Aboriginals have been responsible for rampant species extinction.

But opponents retort that indigenous people now prefer modern conveniences to tradition. . . .

Mr Buchanan, 36, is one of only 100 remaining Kuku Yalanji people,<sup>2</sup> and agreed that hunting on traditional land helped restore his people's dignity.<sup>3</sup>

He said the Kuku Yalanji would apply under the Aboriginal Land Act for hunting rights in sections of Mossman Gorge National Park and Daintree National Park where their ancestors once roamed along the 'dreaming track'.<sup>4</sup>

'Our people used to walk along there in the Dream Time, and they used to go hunting. We want to get that back so we can go hunting,' he said.<sup>5</sup>

. . . . We would only take enough for what we need for our families.<sup>6</sup>

While most tribesmen hunted with spears and boomerangs 'like the old people', others were known sometimes to use guns, Mr Buchanan said.

Hunting in national parks is by no means guaranteed under the legislation, which requires Aborigines to apply for inalienable freehold title on the grounds of traditional or historical association. Only gazetted parks will be subject to claims but none has been gazetted and it is widely rumoured that a maximum of only four parks will be.<sup>7</sup>

economic interests. Instead, affective agonism/antagonism is found among discourses in dispute, so that the effects of contestatory positioning require specific calculation for each circumstance.

<sup>1</sup> This is a (post-colonial) *reversal* of the beliefs that Aboriginals did *not* manage the land, beliefs which in turn were held to be justification for colonisation.

<sup>2</sup> There is an discomfiting relationship between conservational discourse which refers to 'rampant species extinction', and this statement of numbers of tribesmen, which could be read within the same discourse, thus objectifying Aboriginals as *part* of the land.

<sup>3</sup> The above statement of numbers of Kuku Yalanji people becomes all the more disconcerting when the same sentence, which begins with objectifying conservationist discourse, invokes the humanist notion of the dignity of these people.

<sup>4</sup> There is a conflict here between discourses of (white) legislation as mediating access to the land and what may legally occur on that land, and the claim to traditional ancestral association with the land which precedes that law.

<sup>5</sup> The Aboriginal claim is made on the basis of regaining ancestral links to land, pointing both to rights prior to the (white) law, and the social justice of regaining what has wrongfully been taken.

<sup>6</sup> Aboriginal claims to hunting rights do not invoke the preservation of tradition as something distinct from material life, but as inextricably part of it, as a matter of livelihood and family support.

<sup>7</sup> This sentence traverses the incompatible discourses of white legislation and mediation of access to the land, and the traditional and historical association (authenticity) required in order to gain access *through* that (white) law.

After a park has been gazetted and a claim lodged, a park management plan must be developed through consultation between Government and the Aboriginal community, and it is in the management plan that hunting rights may be specified. . . .

But the director of the Cape Tribulation Tropical Research Station, Dr Hugh Spenser, fears that the opportunity to obtain hunting rights would 'open a Pandora's box' because any management plan could not be properly policed.<sup>1</sup>

'The only genuinely feasible way to manage national parks is to take an entirely hands-off approach,' Dr Spenser said.<sup>2</sup>

. . . . Dr Spenser said hunting in national parks in the 1990s and beyond would threaten the viability of animal species. 'There are more (Aborigines) than there were before white settlement, the areas have been under far more pressure so the numbers of animals are probably far reduced,' he said.<sup>3</sup>

The chairman of Douglas Shire Council, Mr Mike Berwick, who is a high-profile north Queensland conservationist attacked the prospect of hunting rights for 'putting one of our most important national assets in the hands of a minority group.'<sup>4</sup>

'They're not the best educated minority group,' Mr Berwick said.

'I really do think national parks come before social issues.'<sup>5</sup>

. . . . A principal teacher of Aboriginal community rangers at Cairns College of TAFE and former vice-president of the Australia Conservation Foundation, Ms Rosemary Hill, said she was working with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to convince sceptical park rangers that their management techniques could be enhanced by Aboriginal involvement, and that hunting rights would not jeopardise their work.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Despite the Aboriginal 'ethical' claim to the land (priority, authenticity), the law is the final arbiter and policer of access.

<sup>2</sup> Aboriginal access to the land is now being inhibited by advocacy of the very approach to 'land management' of which colonisers accused Aborigines as justification for their proprietorial rights.

<sup>3</sup> Again, Aborigines are located within a broadly ecological discourse which conflates them with all 'species' on the land whose balance must be managed by white (conservational) law.

<sup>4</sup> There is implicit definition, here, of the valorised subject of Nation whose position guarantees access to 'national assets' *against* the access of 'minority groups'. White colonisation and settlement rendered Aborigines a 'minority', and now this is being used to exclude them from claims not only to national assets, but to national subjectivity. The true national subject -- the 'us' is inscribed.

<sup>5</sup> This is a reversal of the earlier *equation* of national parks with social issues. Ironically, national park and conservation promotional discourse explicitly presents these *as* social issues themselves, in appeals to the preservation of wildlife and the natural environment 'for our children and our children's children'.

<sup>6</sup> Even when Aboriginal access to national park land is advocated, this is on the basis of their *contribution* to (the white notion of) park management techniques, one which will sustain the priority of 'national parks' as the way in which people relate to the 'natural environment'.

In this clamour of discourses characteristic of post-colonial hybridity and abjection, we find tradition, tourism, livelihood, and conservation both resistant to, and deeply implicated in, one another. Aborigines, as well as subjects of claims to rights which would keep traditions alive, preserve dignity, and supplement their livelihood, are objects of discourses of conservation and ecology. While some discourses propose the equal importance of environmental and social issues, others use conservationist interests to instal the dominant National subject for whom national parks are a resource, against minority groups whose discounted claim on this 'national resource' diminishes their status as included in the valorised national 'us'. Further, while the advent of national parks is part of the same modernisation that generally identifies hunting with guns and vehicles, Aborigines are condemned for not articulating their claims within the confines of 'authentic tradition'. Even where traditional hunting 'rights' are granted, these -- despite grounds in historical and traditional association -- are entirely mediated and 'policed' by the Law.

Clearly these discourses are all located on the inside-outside rims of each other, and while the positions from which they are articulated are discernable in relation to the complex of power relations into which they are inserted and through which they are inscribed, these positions themselves traverse multiple subjectivities-in-discourse, and require specific calculation of their effects. For example, the Aboriginal seeking hunting rights is not simply the subject of tradition, of discourses of cultural survival and economic livelihood, of modernity, and so on, but each and all of these. But the situation is more complex still: all of these discourses are located on the borders of local (cultural/national) mediation, and inter-national circulation. Resource issues -- the productivity of the land and consumerism (including tourism) -- defence, social and environmental concerns, while identified as central to cultural or national self-definition and autonomy, circulate within inter-national, even global, forms, and point to the *lack of autonomy* of cultural and national discourses. Thus the post-colonial culture or nation is abjected by the problematisation of the very (discursive) autonomy that is asserted in discourse. Again, post-colonialism as 'subject' of national or cultural identity is unlocatable, drawn into the abyss.

Through analysis of discourses of the land as central to identity, I have shown that post-colonial cultural identity is threatened from within, in



the heterogeneity of hybrid discourses which problematise subjective integrity, while at the same time being threatened from without by their implication in the circulation of international discursive forms, problematising autonomy. Nation and patriarchy may be likened in their respective relations to the land and to the maternal body; that is, maternity may be seen as the *ground* upon which patriarchy is erected. Therefore, just as 'national identity' is only tenable to the extent of repression or sublimation of difference, the social-subjective organisation of patriarchy produces its valorised subjectivity by containing woman-as-Mother. Having linked Nation and patriarchy, I now link land and mother as the bodily-connoted abject of the National subject. I discuss three novels which are crucially about the maternal body and its resistance to patriarchal containment; its difference within patriarchy both as otherness in relation to the masculine norm, and as fertility -- difference and multiplicity within itself which produces a deferral of paternity-as-identity. Audrey Thomas's 'trilogy' of novels, *Mrs Blood*,<sup>40</sup> *Songs My Mother Taught Me*,<sup>41</sup> and *Blown Figures*,<sup>42</sup> addresses the confrontation of 'phallocracy' by the maternal body, not to valorise the maternal body as women's identity, but to abject the phallocentric subject with what it excludes, critiquing its pretensions to mastery and autonomy. Beginning with *Mrs Blood*'s exploration of the phallocentric mind-body split which identifies 'woman' with 'body', the trilogy moves to *Songs*, and Isobel's tracing of her problematic relationship with her mother within this social context, and then to *Blown Figures*, and the dismantling of the unified and autonomous self.

#### 7. IV. The Transgressive Writing of the Maternal Body.

The feminine can be understood as abject for masculinity. It is needed in order to erect the latter into positivity, but it must be disavowed in order to establish that positivity. It is externalised by the masculine and therefore constitutes a threat to 'identity' from outside, while its source is always from inside that identity, as its excess. Although it returns to invade the phallic identity *as if* from outside, it is not strictly an-other. The relation of masculine and feminine is not one of sexual difference, because the feminine is neither a sex (it is *no-sex*), nor different (it is the negative of the Same). In relation to the bodily constitution of the abject it could be posited that the scopic drive, actualised through the eyes, constitutes the eyes as rims through which light enters and the image is

'expelled', or externalised on to the bodies of 'women'. Sexual difference is expressed not in terms of 'masculine' and 'feminine', but 'men and mothers'.<sup>43</sup> This requires further analysis of the relations between maternity, subjectivity and abjection, both for the phallogentric Symbolic and, importantly, for those unspeakable beings, women.

Grosz explains that "For women, the only socially recognised, validated position in the Symbolic is as mother."<sup>44</sup> However this is hardly a position of 'proper' subjectivity, but an indirect, 'borrowed' place, in which "maternity . . . connects the woman to a 'symbolic-paternal' axis, on which her body is marked as phallic and/or castrated of the male attribute." Her pathway towards Symbolic significance is by way of the child, for "if the maternal body provides the means by which the child acquires a symbolic place (even if by abandoning her), the child in turn provides the conditions under which the woman-mother has indirect access to the Other." However, the maternal body is the abject for the subject, as it is the mother's body which is expelled in order to delimit the 'clean and proper' Symbolic body. Similarly, the encroachment of maternity in and on to the Symbolic can be seen as the latter's abjection, disturbing the stability of its law. For example,

Based on her own pre-oedipal and oedipal attachments, the woman-as-mother remains divided. She produces the 'social matter' that, in being subjected to the father's law, provides subjects for the social formation. On the other hand, maternity is also a breach in the symbolic, an unspoken *jouissance* whose form is always reduced to be never exhausted by the symbolic.<sup>45</sup>

The transgressive energies of *jouissance* pose a threat to the security of the Symbolic law. The maternal body is therefore "the site that must be territorialised, marked by a proprietorial name, contained by it, for the father's law to be accepted by the child. She must be recognised as his, and regulated by his law -- hence the castrating brand on her body."<sup>46</sup>

To the extent that motherhood involves activities of nurturance in relation to the infant -- for whom, in the pre-oedipal, she is phallic -- the mother approaches the condition of 'subject'. It is also to this extent that she is subject to abjection, as the processes of her body associated with maternity, from menstruation to lactation, occur outside of Symbolic subjectivity; these are not things she, as subject, *does*:

Like the abject, maternity is the splitting, fusing, merging, fragmenting of a series of bodily processes outside the will or control of a subject. Woman, the woman-mother, does not find her femininity or identity as a woman affirmed in maternity but, rather, her corporeality, her animality, her position on the threshold between nature and culture. Her 'identity' as a subject is betrayed by pregnancy; and undermined in lactation and nurturance, where she takes on the status of the part-object, or breast for the child.<sup>47</sup>

If the maternal body is denied a 'proper', active place in the Symbolic because of the constitutive improprieties of this body, rendering it unable to be cleanly delimited in relation to its 'animality', then the specifically phallogentric investment of linguistic subjectivity in the subject's divorce from corporeality may constitute a site of contestation of those very subjective structures. In according, for example, the bodily substances associated with the abject -- those which *threaten* the subject -- the status of a language of the body, (the) speaking and writing (the) body, a breakdown of the distance between the subject and the body becomes possible. This would point to the possibility of a *new* Symbolic which would admit, and hear, women as subjects.

*Mrs Blood*, *Songs*, and *Blown Figures* are a trilogy of novels by Audrey Thomas which negotiate through their protagonist Isobel, the mother as abjection, and the abjection of the mother. As is now familiar, phallogentric subjectivity is predicated on the Imaginary split into self and other, and the Symbolic separation of the subject from the body. The protagonist in these novels by Thomas is a woman for whom this splitting is less covered by, than pervasive of, her attempts to articulate an identity in the Symbolic. Instead of the unitary 'I', Isobel is split between 'Mrs Thing' and 'Mrs Blood' in *Mrs Blood*. These names themselves evoke, as does the novel, the radical subject/body separation required for 'clean and proper' subjectivity. Nevertheless, her less stable position in the Symbolic, and less secure subjectivity are enacted through the gradual and transgressive merging of these 'ideally' separate spheres, while the novel's title suggests the ultimate triumph of the body over the order which would silence it. In *Songs*, Isobel's childhood and adolescent consciousness is already divided between third-person 'Isobel' (or 'she') and first-person 'I' (also her initial). As a child, she remembers, "I had addressed post-cards to myself. 'Dear Isobel./ Having a swell time./ Your friend./ I'" (27). Still later, the same splitting persists as she describes how "Only Isobel was moving, now under the shadow of Panther Mountain. It

was suddenly cold and I shivered" (178). However, in *Blown Figures*, not only are there multiple 'Isobels', all inhabitants of different places and times of her life so far, but other 'characters' appear to be mirrored alter-egos of Isobel, so that 'she' may be split into Isobel/Miss Miller ("Don't speak to me, Miss Miller. I am sure I shall split. I will split! (190)), and Isobel/Delilah ("The blood which links all women was linking them now" (479)). The objective or separate existence of these characters is occasionally doubted, or doubtful. Isobel tells herself that "Delilah Rosenberg does not exist. Or perhaps it is you? Perhaps this is only Delilah's dream? Have you thought about that at all?" (164). Similarly, she tells Miss Miller, "You're only a sort of thing in my dream, Miss Miller; you're only a sort of thing in my dream" (297), but soon undermines the security of her own objective status: "Ah, Isobel, how do you like belonging to another person's dream?" (301). The instability of her identity is literally reflected in the (mirror-)image she perceives of her 'self': "I can do anything I want with Isobel. I can make her fat or thin, like a funhouse mirror. Give her an elegant back -- she always wanted an elegant back -- a lisp, a limp, a missing finger, a wart on the end of her nose, a lover, a husband, a dead child" (140). However, the assumption of a position of mastery of the split between self and image is ironic: she does not *choose* a dead child. Such mastery is an illusion of masculine subjectivity which, even *as* an illusion, is less available to women. Thus while seeing, or recognising herself in the field of the Other -- in the dream of another -- as do all subjects, her 'I' is not isomorphic with her 'self' as the masculine 'I' is; instead, it gives way and leaves an undecidable merging of self and other which is precisely *not* 'clean and proper' subjectivity.

The multiplicity of Isobel's selves is unable to be contained by the flat mirror of mimetic representation and self-distance. The failure of this mirror to return her 'self' to her in its image is earlier suggested in *Songs*: "'Isobel, do you remember when [mother] smashed the bathroom mirror with a cold-cream jar?'/ 'No.'/ 'Of course you do. The frame hung there for days and one night, brushing your teeth, you chanced to look up and saw only a blank piece of cardboard and not your face. Your face had disappeared.'/ 'I remember. I thought it was an omen at the time'" (84). The mirror that fails to reflect her image also fails to instigate the conditions necessary for symbolisation -- self-representation in language. From childhood, Isobel has a difficult relationship to naming systems, and the relationship of their authority to their 'authenticity'. She reflects on

"Rome. Syracuse. Ithaca. Troy. Years later I was to wonder what scholar-gypsy had wandered through our state, bestowing such illustrious names on places (which seemed to me then, years later) so singularly lacking in lustre" (13). Her attempts to *realise* the identity of name and object are destabilised by Harry, himself a transgressor of the Symbolic Law in refusing the *position* it offers him as grandfather in favour of simply being called 'Harry'. As Isobel craves the assurance of authenticity, even her own name comes to trouble her with its possible inauthenticity:

('Harry, what d'you call this tree?'  
 'It doesn't matter.'  
 'It does. It does. What d'you call it, Harry?'  
 'Why don't you name it yourself? Why take a name that someone else has given it?'  
 'Because that's its real name.'  
 'No, Isobel. It's not.'  
 'What's its real name, then?'  
 'God knows. I don't.'  
 'Is my real name not Isobel?'  
 'It might be. Wait and see.') (87-8)

However, Harry is able to assume a (colonising) position of authority to bestow names, while Isobel intuits the elusiveness of that position for herself. Eventually names come to lose their integrity and become the stuff of 'knock-knock' jokes (142; 188; 196).

The Symbolic that cannot guarantee that her 'real' name is Isobel, cannot provide her with her *proper* name as 'woman', for it cannot articulate sexual difference. Maternity, as the proof of sexual difference which still cannot be represented, confronts the Symbolic with the abyss of abjection at its borders, a "hole into which the subject may fall when its identity is put into question."<sup>48</sup> It constitutes the fluidity through which 'woman' exceeds the solid Symbolic and rejoins her corporeality. In a Symbolic system which valorises unity, it is experienced as the splitting of the self, evoked, for example, in Mrs Blood's description of giving birth as being "Consumed with pain. Consummated. That was at eight and the child was born at ten. Rip. Rip. And then rest in peace" (183). Even the young Isobel of *Songs* has articulated the splitting (and doubling) of her self in maternity: "Once I had two rag dolls, mother and baby, whom I called 'Me' and 'Mimi'. . . . Ten years later I came upon them by accident, bleached featureless by the wind and sun and rain. . . . It was like finding two small corpses. . . . Isobel, perhaps they are your totems?" (19). It is

significant that these passages both combine the notions of maternal splitting and of death. Maternity is the death of (the mastery of) the 'subject' -- a provisional term in relation to women -- not only because "'She' does not exist as such,"<sup>49</sup> but because it confronts the proper (masculine) subject of the Symbolic with *his* corporeality, and thus his mortality, as well as the failure of his autonomy and integrity. As Grosz explains, "If the object is the external support of the subject, the object is more the fading, instability or even *disappearance* of the subject."<sup>50</sup>

The dangers posed to the Symbolic by maternity, and by maternal desire -- the desire which would keep the subject from identifying with, and acceding to the Law/Name/No of the Father -- require that desire to be policed, both on a subjective and a socio-cultural level. Social taboos serve to isolate women, particularly in their maternal function, both by identifying them as potential contaminators of cultural purity, or the idealised purity of culture, and by ensuring their removal from potential (male) victims of such contamination. Kristeva points out that abjection "takes the form of the *exclusion* of a substance (nutritive or linked to sexuality), the execution of which coincides with the sacred since it sets it up."<sup>51</sup> In *Blown Figures*, such taboos are on one level represented as constitutive of tribal African (Ghanaian) social relations. They include the forbidding of contact between 'woman' and the cultural-sacred, even when the sacred is abstracted from the bodily, or the female: "No woman may possess or touch a drum and yet the tense membrane is made from an elephant's ear (pref. female), the hairy side outermost" (240). This example clearly evokes the dependence of language on the maternal body, while excluding that body from speech/language. Taboos acknowledge the source of female/bodily profanity, so that "The *tumpane* drums taboo most rigidly:/ Blood in any form/ Menstruating women/ Jaw bone or skulls" (241). Further, they attribute *blame* for 'natural' misfortune, thus regulating social behaviour or relations, especially that of, or in relation to, women: "Infidelity on the part of the woman, if not immediately confessed, can lead to a miscarriage or the death of the woman in childbirth" (310). Similarly,

A miscarriage at any period is attributed to any of the following causes:

1. Adultery on the part of the wife

....

3. Little red ants falling upon her

....

5. The machinations of a co-wife (kora). . .

....

9. The sight of blood

10. A pregnant woman should not look upon a monkey or upon any deformity, even a badly carved wooden figure, 'lest she give birth to a child like it.' (311)

That women, and in particular *mothers*, are transmitters of such beliefs, thus regulating their daughters' relation to the socio-Symbolic, will be addressed shortly. Nevertheless, such explanations of 'accidents of birth' in relation to maternal behaviour instantiate the abjection of the Symbolic: in 'rationalising', they seek to cover the abject; they both blame the maternal body, and thus admit it, and at the same time they remove it, or disavow its power precisely through its containment in the socio-Symbolic Law.

Quite apart from women's 'active' breaking of such taboos, the sense of an *inevitable* association between maternity and abjection, contained in the location of maternity outside of subjective agency, is evoked in those events to which ensuing misfortune is attributed: red ants falling, like menstrual blood, as a 'fact of nature'; sexual desire in its 'natural' form, unlegislated or un-Symbolised (in marriage, or its social approximations). Indeed the impossibility of dissociation of the maternal/body from the abject is suggested in the impossible -- in the sense that any sacred ideal is strictly (the) impossible -- belief that "Somewhere in this land there is a sacred village in which no one is allowed to die. Nor is any woman there allowed to bleed" (337). As Grosz explains, the sacred, institutionalised in religion, is claimed by Kristeva to "wrest the subject away from the abyss of abjection, to *displace* abjection,"<sup>52</sup> the response also exemplified by Katherine in *The Well*. This function is found in *Songs*, in the figure of Aunt Harriet. Scandalised by the suggestion that the now adolescent Isobel and her older sister Jane attend a dance, with its implications of developing teenage sexuality, Aunt Harriet sat "praying, head bowed now, mumbling at her lap. A red sun, enormously swollen, burst and stained the evening sky" (124). Thus religion is confronted by that which establishes both its necessity and also its limits: the fertile life of the body cannot be totally excluded. Indeed, Aunt Harriet's denial of the life of the body casts her into the 'opposite' but inseparable abjection represented by the death of the body, as she -- 'she' in (the) place of the body -- "rocked slowly back and forth in our dead grandma's rocking chair" (125).

Clearly, then, the dependence of the socio-Symbolic order on the exclusion of the body is not simply a feature of tribal societies or 'other' cultures. While the otherness of Africa is demonstrated, particularly in *Mrs Blood* and *Blown Figures*, as a construct of 'western' narcissism, what is excluded or disavowed is not without, but within. Just as the excess of the subject is displaced on to the feminine, that of 'western' culture is displaced on to the 'African other'. Mrs Thing reflects that

The old myths about the enormous size of the Negro's penis have been dissipated, but it is interesting that they ever got started; for this is white man's myth -- savagery, lust, enormous prowess and enormous appetite. 'Like animals.' Our lust has been intellectualized into love between the sheets, maybe once or twice a week and not at all if she doesn't feel like it. Nothing forced. All gentle. Yet often this is sham. Gentleness masks indifference, 'love' masks the absence of desire. (118)

The Imaginary production of the cultural Other by the western gaze is suggested in Mrs Thing's young son, still innocent or unacculturated to western racism, "holding hands with Negroes without even thinking about it -- colourblind, happy" (161). The narcissism of the gaze means that the Other is seen, not in its alterity, but in its inferior replication of the Eurocentric/phallogocentric *model*. Thus cultural colonisation constructs its subjects to have a psychical investment in identification with the coloniser, just as a woman is required to despise her/maternal castration, and identify with masculinity in order to appropriate, and necessarily only approximate, subjectivity.

As I have argued, abjection is the affect of re-cognition of the disavowed hybrid status of the cultural Other in the colonial encounter. Kristeva has included "hybrids" as implied in the "prohibition against leavened bread"<sup>53</sup> which is found among the prohibitions in Leviticus signifying the exclusion of the abject. A link between Bhabha's analysis of colonial-cultural hybridity and Kristeva's of abjection may therefore be posited. European culture is dependent for its self-recognition, and the recognition of its superiority, on the gaze which produces the Imaginary, but inferior, Other, and on the desired return of the gaze (of recognition). This has been illustrated by the discussion above. However, the 'Other' is negative by virtue of its attributed 'animality', and thus necessarily excluded from the *properly cultural* sphere. Nevertheless the dependence on 'its' animality for the delimitation of the 'western' self returns as the



bodily constitution, dependence, and debt of that self. For example, Mrs Thing, in hospital in West Africa, reflects, "I was white and therefore vulnerable" (36). She is entirely dependent, like an infant in the semiotic *chora*, on the care, feeding and cleaning of the African nurses Elizabeth, Alexandria, Esther, and Grace Abounding (46; 112) and on the authority of Doctors Biswas and Shankar (92-4; 96; 131-3), just as she is dependent at home on Joseph's cooking, tidying, washing, and child-care (152). In such contexts, received patterns of interaction -- "Madame must not cry in the presence of the natives" (92) -- are meaningless. Such dependence confronts the 'self' with its 'birth' out of the body of the other, so that identity is not clearly bounded. The Other, as cultural or racial difference, is the threat to identity from within, as sexual difference is for phallogentric subjectivity and patriarchal social relations. Africa is within the cultural self represented by white Isobel; it is her, and her culture's constitutive debt. Thus *Blown Figures* includes the epigraph, "'We have all Africa and her prodigies/Within us', Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, 1642." It now becomes possible to read the representations of African cultural beliefs, practices and taboos in that novel in relation to the consciousness of Isobel, and its failure to repress the abject, or her own status *as* the abject. These representations are better seen as projections of her own bodily fears and desires, rather than intellectualised 'cultural comparativism'. As Mrs Thing, she concedes that "My Africa is only real for me" (43), and by the end of *Blown Figures*, she and 'Africa' have merged in the rite of propitiation which she sought in her journey into the abject, to purify the abject. Kristeva's claim that "The various means of purifying the abject -- the various catharses -- make up the history of religions, and end up with that catharsis par excellence called art,"<sup>54</sup> suggests a reading of *Blown Figures*, perhaps the whole trilogy, as just such a catharsis.

Just as 'Africa' is identifiable by its *constitution* as being within, it is also demonstrated as being so through the identification of many socio-cultural beliefs and practices in Isobel's Euro-American cultural context which are founded upon the (attempted) exclusion of the body. The isolation by frank taboo of the maternal body is reflected in often less overtly articulated isolation, hiding, or social absence of the bodily signs of sexual desire, fertility, and maternity in Isobel's childhood and adult worlds. For example, where there is sexual desire, conventions of propriety attempt to silence it. In *Blown Figures*, Isobel describes the

attempts to silence, by the force of social convention and masculine authority, not simply the 'act' itself, but sexual *pleasure*, those moments beyond the Symbolic into which her body projected her:

Those strange sounds -- not words exactly -- pre-verbal, originating in the very darkest centre of the body and rising through the mouth, like smoke -- excited her. . . . Later, a child in the bedroom or their own strange aversion (habit now) to letting go. They were like deaf-mutes. It bothered her and sometimes, frantic with delight at what was happening between them she would cry out, but he never made a sound. She became ashamed, again, of her abandonment. (95)

Sexual desire is linked to the animality of the body which abjects the subject and endangers the social order: it is likened to "a large unruly and utterly hopeless dog. . . . To chain him up would not be enough . . . he might get away and crash through the prize borders or run into the High Street and cause accidents" (215).

Menstruation is ideally contained by a similar silence and invisibility, even between mothers and daughters, despite the reference in *Blown Figures* to "The blood which links all women" (479). Mrs Blood, for example, retrieves a childhood memory, when "Mama looked down in the paper bag she was carrying and said, 'Now isn't that the limit. I wanted paper napkins.'/ But when we said, 'What's the matter?' she said never mind" (164). If the *sign* of fertility is excluded from the proper articulation of the social order, so is its proof. Again, Mrs Blood recalls, "I don't remember seeing a pregnant woman when I was a child. Nor asking a question about sex. Where were all the pregnant women?" (163).

Finally, birth itself must also be invisible, unlinked to any bodily processes which remind the social order of the 'mess' (the bloodshed) on which it is built, and which it tries to cover. As Isobel reminds, indeed reproves, herself in *Blown Figures*, following the birth of her child all blood was cleaned away so that "when Jason came you were spotless and sitting up" (394). The inability of the Symbolic to admit (into itself) the excess of the 'clean and proper', phallic body-ideal, is demonstrated as resulting in further practices of isolation. In *Blown Figures*, the isolation of the mother is described, in the 'African' context, in the return of a woman "to her mother's house, to await confinement . . . [because of] the always-present dread that she might be going to bring forth some monstrosity. Among her own clanfolk this would be kept a secret, and so

ridicule or other consequences to her husband's people would be avoided" (309).

Isobel is keenly aware of the structuring of the socio-Symbolic by its repression of the body. Those who acknowledge, or live in contiguity with the body, whose subjective cover over the abject is ineffective or absent, are isolated as suffering *madness*. Kristeva argues that "Owing to the ambiguous opposition I/Other, Inside/Outside -- an opposition that is vigorous but pervious, violent but uncertain -- there are contents, 'normally' unconscious in neurotics, that become explicit if not conscious in 'borderline' patients' speeches and behaviour."<sup>55</sup> Indeed it is the rebellious life of the body which Isobel meets in her work in a mental hospital in *Songs*. She is welcomed to "the shit ward" (147), where she sees old naked ladies with "gray pubic hair, white pubic hair, streaks of brown excrement on their faces and legs" (147). Despite her early reaction of horror, she finds that "Two weeks later I could pick up a ball of shit and toss it back to Sophie" (148). Such an admission of the abject is described by Isobel as the loss of her "mind's virginity" (148), while the incarceration of the sexual language of the body, or more correctly, the language of the sexual body -- *jouissance* -- is represented in the response of the patient to sexual stimulation: "It's the only time she ever says an intelligible word" (155). By contrast, and as an illustration of the Symbolic intolerance of the excesses of madness, Isobel considers her own mother who regularly locked herself away and even committed acts of destruction (82; 84) and then distanced herself from her outbursts, retreating back into the safety of Symbolic containment:

Which was worse, Isobel? The sound of the key from the inside, locking her in, or sitting downstairs or waiting in your bedroom for the key to turn again? When she might burst out like a circus animal, like the real Grace Poole, roaring, biting, eager to attack.

Or when she called us all together and laughed her little laugh and asked us to forget. (46)

Patterns of repression are set down for Isobel within the initial social context of the family. In *Songs*, she recalls "We lived in a house where the body was virtually denied any existence -- certainly any pleasant one. . . . Bodies were ugly, shameful things" (63). Bodily processes, the excesses of the subject, are unspeakable for her and her family. In relation to her parents, Isobel "found that the sound of their chewing was enough to drive me into cramps of rage. I stuck my nails into my palms until they

bled. It seemed incredible to me that I wouldn't murder one or both of them before the summer was out" (138). The unspeakable parts of the body and bodily processes, those which cannot be spoken but themselves threaten to 'speak' through the lapses in the subject, are submitted to, and silenced by, containment within elaborate systems of euphemism (63-5). It is specifically the abjection belonging to the danger to identity and integrity from outside to which these processes pertain, most graphically represented in *Blown Figures* in both its exclusion and its return, when Isobel had met

a mining engineer who told her how his wife was missing something, had a little sack attached to her. . . . How could he have married her, knowing? How could he stand to see her naked, with her shamefilled secret? Yet now, watching Mrs Hankinson, Isobel was made fully aware for the first time of the foulness we all carry within us, the reservoirs of pee, the huge sausage-casing holding back our shit. (67)

Also associated with the abjection of waste is the corpse, and social practices serve to distance this "transitional matter, mixture; [for] it is above all the opposite of the spiritual, of the symbolic, and of divine law."<sup>56</sup> The sacred village referred to in *Blown Figures* which forbade women to bleed, also forbade anyone to die (337). It is the corpse which confronts the subject with its imprisonment by time and mortality: "8.01/8.02/. . . /8.03/. . . 'Isobel, you are dying faster than the day'" (18), whispers inside her head, in *Songs*. Isobel describes the disavowal of these bodily processes exemplified when her father would visit his parents' grave and plant a geranium, "his hands scented with damp earth and geranium leaves" (36). This represents the covering of the idea of the smell of decay (thus admitting it) with the scent of life and growth. The grass around the grave described as "green and soft" (36) symbolises the covering of the cold rigidity of the corpse. The erection of white marble tombstones in the form of angels (36) represents the insistence on the spiritual (paradoxically rendered material) as a cover over the profane materiality of the body.

Yet the subject finds it difficult to relinquish its illusory hold over the body: it is that hold which, after all, brings it into being. Family graves serve to disavow separation in death, while Isobel's mother "vowed she'd never be buried with a pack of Clearys" (37), as if the bodies in the ground *were* Clearys in a more essential way than simply for the living/subject.

Thus she refuses the non-social, non-subjective, non-identity of the body. Death is denied in the projection of a continued coherence of the subject and the life of the body. This is evoked in *Blown Figures* in the passage concerning "Donating Your Corpse" (290). The information provided locates the subject in the abject space between agency -- the ability to choose to donate the corpse -- and the loss of subjective mastery of the body, not to 'nature', but to the Symbolic which precedes and supercedes, in short which *masters* the subject: "Legally your corpse does not belong to you" (290). Yet the Symbolic is then confronted with its own foundation on the material rather than the sacred, in the concept of ownership and its implications of money, or at least a relation of exchange which interrupts the binary Imaginary, and thus the grounds of the unity, autonomy and integrity of the subject. The subject is always in debt (to the Other).

However, the Isobel of *Blown Figures* embarks on a journey to confront her abjection, and thus does not isolate the body, even in death; instead "she understood and accepted the terrible pull of the dead, knew she was as haunted as any old derelict house of her childhood, that there was within her a small ghost which had to be propitiated and set free" (194). The threat from outside identity is therefore acknowledged also to be within, and constitutive of it, undermining the clean and proper delineation of phallogentric subjectivity.

Although abjection is an effect of phallogentric subjectivity, which itself privileges the masculine as positivity, the implication of mothers in the preservation of that order cannot be overlooked, nor the specificity of its transmission from mother to daughter, where each is determined to represent the abjection of the other. While maternity in the sense of pregnancy and birth is held to be a process without an agent, the functions of nurturance take place "at the level of the subject,"<sup>57</sup> and are manifestations of "maternal authority."<sup>58</sup> They do not, however, represent a subjectivity for *women*, as suggested in Isobel's mother's *phallic* identification. She frequently assumes the role of guardian and enforcer of the Symbolic Law, in contrast to her husband's failures in this function, represented in *Songs*, for example, in the ineffectual -- castrated? -- character of his speech. He often responds, when addressed, with the truncated "'Wha... ?'" (74; 81; 89). On the other hand it is she who, when she thought she heard someone in the house at night, "stood in the kitchen, a lumber jacket over her nightgown, hair straggling down her

back. She had snatched up one of the two rifles that hung over the fireplace. Stood there now flushed and triumphant, the rifle in her hands" (90). Similarly it is her authority which makes Isobel apprehensive. Aware that her father is nearby when she meets a boy by the lake, she explains, "I was truly scared now. Not really of my father but of what my father would say. Of what he would tell my mother" (179).

Jason's mother, as Isobel's mother-in-law, functions as the guardian of the Symbolic order by mediating Isobel's relation to that order through her husband. It has been shown how Jason's mother's presence stifled Isobel's expressions of sexual desire and sexual pleasure, thereby preventing disruption to the totality of accession of the husband/son to Symbolic subjectivity. Yet this function could also be seen as phallocentrism's determination of a structured competition between mother(-in-law) and wife (potential outlaw, through her sexual/maternal desire).<sup>59</sup> On the one hand, as Irigaray glosses the argument of Freud, "If woman wishes to attract man, she must identify herself with his mother,"<sup>60</sup> and therefore take the place of his mother -- a relation characterised as aggression in the Imaginary economy. On the other hand, if the mother has been denied the desire of the son, she may represent the Law for the wife in order to prevent her from gaining what the mother has had to relinquish *for* that Law. This suggests Kristeva's discussion in "Women's Time" of women's "counterinvestment" in the socio-Symbolic contract, where she may, "by counterinvesting the violence she has endured [in relation to that contract], make of herself a 'possessed' agent of this violence in order to combat what was experienced as frustration."<sup>61</sup> Thus it is Jason's mother who, in *Blown Figures*, "did the sheets every Monday morning" (215), the silence of their pure whiteness rebuking Isobel with her body's inappropriate transgressions, for "she had haemorrhaged, so briefly, in Jason's parents' house, on Jason's mother's clean white sheets" (214). She recalls the birth of her daughter Mary: "You always bled a lot, even then. His mother came to see you and, embarrassed, you asked if she would mind washing [the nightgown] out for you. Why embarrassed, Isobel, why EMBARRASSED?" (394). The intrusion of the Symbolic Mother into the desire of the woman/daughter is suggested in Isobel's meditation on the demand of that Law that maternity and desire be clearly separated, that the Mother be *asexual*:

Curled up against Jason in the big old bed she listened while he read her Don Quixote and pushed down her terrible desire for him, a desire which (oh! she understood, she really did!) because of her great belly, because of the big old bed (his parents had moved into the guest room) because of his mother (a light sleeper) in the next room, because of the sheets on Monday mornings, because of the very nature of the house they were living in was no longer reciprocated.

Because, too, she had become for him once and for all MOTHER? Because her desires for the pleasures of the body should have been tempered or superceded by her concern with and absorption by the great mystery inside her? (215-6)

The abjection of the maternal body is, however, initially experienced (for the woman) in the relation between the daughter and her own mother. The daughter's ability to separate herself, in oedipalisation, from her mother is severely impeded by the recognition of their common 'castration'. Similarly, the mother's radical splitting of herself in pregnancy<sup>62</sup> is redoubled in the externalisation (in birth) of a part of herself who is not herself, but another *her*-self. The daughter reminds the mother of her own 'castration'. Each is therefore implicated in the abjection of the other. For Isobel's mother, in *Songs*, her daughters seemed to be "an affront to her, the awkward and visible proof to herself, as well as to Harry, the neighbors, society at large, that she had been intimate with this *FAILURE*, this lame excuse for a man" (63). Isobel realises that for her mother, who has invested, or found, too much of her *self* in her daughters, "Each insult to me or Jane was a terrible insult to her" (68). There occurs a reversal of positions in which her mother becomes the indignant and uncomprehending (and spiteful) child left out of social events: "'Why not? You're just as good as she is. They say her father's got a touch of the tarbrush anyway. Who does she think she is?'" (68), while Isobel assumes the mother's cold authority for her mother: "'Could we drop it?'" (68).

Blame becomes a term of relation between Isobel and her mother. Her mother explains the stretch marks . . . [which] happened when she was carrying me because I was too big" (64), while for Isobel, the sight of her mother's body confronts her with the proof of her own bodily origins, her own implication in the body which "filled me with shame and deep disgust. She had large heavy breasts, and her stomach, which stuck out when she took off her corsets, was covered with minute blue-white scars, very fine, like the lines on an ice-skating rink" (64). The *mutual*

antagonism is suggested in Isobel's recollection that "I could not bear to think of her as having bodily sensations and functions at all. Blood spots on the back of her nightgown made me want to vomit, and she herself called menstruation by derogatory names" (64), while the guilt or shame inherited by the daughter from her relation to the mother underlies Isobel's memory that "For three months after I began to menstruate I slept naked on the floor of my bedroom so as not to spot the sheets and let her know" (64).

Isobel's miscarriage, the focus of *Mrs Blood* and the background to *Blown Figures*, links the abjection of the maternal body and the abjection of the corpse. The link is prefigured however, in *Mrs Blood*, in the motif of the accident involving the milk truck, "the milk truck on its side and another car smashed underneath it and blood and milk together running all across the road" (20). This may be seen as the abject mingling of maternal nurturance, which sustains the body but compromises the autonomy of the subject, and the blood which represents both fertility -- the organic origins and the debt of the subject to the mother -- and death, both as the limit of subjectivity to which the subject is drawn, and the mortality of the body, the excess and underside of the subject. Isobel's body is the site of the social repressions and controls upon which the Symbolic order depends: for that order, she is utterly (the) abject. Isobel is inseparably implicated in the ambiguities of blood and the threats of life and death associated with it. She flees reminders of it, such as when she "saw a man thump clots of tomato sauce on a fillet of sheet-white fish and she fled the pavilion in terror" (193).

Her own body-limits lack clean and clear delineation, as she discovers, as Mrs Thing, in relation to others, "It is impossible for me to see other people as separate from myself. Jason is my husband; Mary my daughter; Nicholas my son" (191). In relation to her own body/consciousness, Mrs Blood declares, "I am covered with memories like barnacles. Weighed down, encrusted with them so that only the vague outline of my original shape remains" (148). Her lack of sense of a 'clean and proper' body is dramatised in the texts through the 'Alice' motif, from Lewis Carroll's novels, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. In *Mrs Blood*, for example, Mrs Thing describes how her feet "seem terribly far away and most unreliable in relation to the heaviness which seems to envelop the rest of me. I remember Alice's debate about how she



would send Christmas presents to her feet" (121). In *Songs*, Isobel recounts during the blood-donating episode, that "I sat looking down at my hand, which seemed about to be about ten times its normal size and had assumed a curious throbbing existence of its own. The second pill made me even more detached than before" (202). In *Blown Figures* one of the numerous 'Alice' passages: "I MUST BE GROWING SMALL AGAIN" (88), combines the unstable perception of body-size, and the swelling of the maternal body in pregnancy and its diminishment in miscarriage, where the mother as 'agent' is 'not there'. The breakdown of Isobel's subjective boundaries is further suggested in *Blown Figures* when "There was a dull thud from somewhere near the pig pen. Isobel felt the red hot blood pour from her divided throat" (139; see also 140).

Each of the three novels has enacted Isobel's problematic relationship to the Symbolic. The many split selves, the failure of 'self-mastery', testify to her inability to unify 'her-self' into coherence: she is never the same as herself. Even in childhood, Isobel has recognised the inability of the mimetic mirror of phallogentrism to 'produce' her presence; her specular absence for that order points to the lack of a stable name, or place, for her (as 'woman') in the Symbolic order of language and subjectivity.

As these novels have further illustrated, phallogentrism determines that it is Mothers who are excluded from the socio-Symbolic: taboos indentify women/mothers as a danger to men, but implicitly as a danger to the Symbolic Law. But the emphasis is on the social production of the abject, of its place in the production of the cultural forms of the sacred, taboos, rituals, beliefs, protocol, 'civility', and so on. The life and death, and the *debt*, of the body are *culturally* contained. However, it is clear that containments and repressions cannot finally exclude the cultural excess; accidents do happen. Life and death -- milk and blood -- meet and mingle into inseparability; the subject confronts the body in inseparability. Isobel is the abject for the Symbolic, but each of the novels posits the insistence of her body on having the 'last word'. Her maternal-bodily transgressions of the socio-Symbolic stain the white sheets of a patriarchal order founded on the 'clean and proper' ideal self.

However, Thomas does not posit the valorisation of the body in any essential, biologicistic sense, over language and subjectivity: this would be utopian inefficacy. For example, haemorrhaging on the point of

miscarriage, Mrs Blood says, "I am vulnerable; I am allied to vulture. One hovers just above the bed. The other -- smaller -- one has begun his tearing from the inside. My baby, my own. When you do that you are allied to these foul-mouthed scavengers" (207). Mrs Blood cannot control what is happening to her body or to her unborn child; the process is without subjectivity. Significantly, it is the bodily-connoted Mrs Blood who, finding this utter submission to the body intolerable, asks "What I really want to know is, granted the non-existence of a God, benign or otherwise, who is responsible for all this?" (209).

These novels demonstrate the need for the excess of culture/the Symbolic to confront that order, contaminate it with what it excludes, in order to dismantle the phallogentric structure which excludes difference and forecloses on relations. Therefore, in the rest of this chapter I return to the metaphor of Nation as phallogentric Self, and as productive of identities of Otherness, and explore some of the consequences for that morphology of post-colonial discourses which abject the unity and integrity of the National subject.

#### 7. V. Purity as Paranoia: The Phallogentric Project(ion).

Subjectivity requires identification with the Other -- the Law -- and as I have argued, the Law is not innocent or neutral, but is gendered (masculine). It produces gendered subjects differentially with reference to the phallus: masculine presence and feminine absence. Therefore, while alienating both masculine and feminine 'subjects' in language, the Symbolic order is *more* foreign for women. It is women's exclusion from the Symbolic, or rather their presence as absence, which sustains its phallic Law and underwrites its continuity. The difficulty of subjectivity for women is shown, in Thomas's novels, to produce relations of guilt, shame, and blame between women: Isobel, Jane and their mother; Isobel and Delilah; Isobel and other mothers. Women represent each others' failure through offering identification with absence or lack.

Even the valorised masculine subject of phallogentrism is not autonomous, but is spoken through the locus of the Other. The means by which this constitutively non-autonomous subject posits itself to be whole and self-sustaining is by paranoid foreclosure on one term of the Imaginary identifications instigated in the mirror encounter. The mirror

reflects the self as whole (through the ideal image/reflection), *and* as *split* into self and other. However, in paranoia,

anything perceived as noxious within the ego (in the interior, as it were) is then projected onto external objects: the 'subject' thus endows the external world with what it takes to be its own worst tendencies and qualities. . . .

This [process of] projection is undertaken in order to maintain the fiction, exactly, of a wholeness and wholesomeness in the 'subject's' internal economy. In other words, the fictional delusion of goodness and plenitude, going by the name of 'I', demands the expulsion, the destruction even, of the 'subject's' own impropriety and division.<sup>63</sup>

I suggest that this paranoid subjective structure characterises phallogentrism's production and vilification of difference, objectified within that system as 'woman', the Imaginary repository of the inadmissible terms of the hybrid self: the animality of the body -- the fertility which threatens the supervalence of the Law with the bodily debt to the (M)other, and the desire that attests to the compromise of autonomy; and the 'castration' (in language) of the subject. Because woman is absence, man can be presence.

While the paranoiac disavows the implication of the Self in the (position of) the Other, "making the inside and the outside distinct repositories," maintaining the "fixity and obstinacy of the outside,"<sup>64</sup> there are two paradoxes which, as in any system of 'purity', are both the points of greatest investment and those which are the most vulnerable or weakest.<sup>65</sup> First, as Smith argues, "in their projective mechanism [paranoid symptoms] both defend and alienate the ego. Projection defends the ego insofar as it demarcates it, gives it an impregnable border with a vigilant border patrol; it also alienates it insofar as it cuts it off from its own production."<sup>66</sup> Thus the efficacy of paranoia is that the defended ego, the whole(some) 'I', may speak unproblematically as the subject of his/her discourse. However, the full capability of the subject -- its *productivity* -- is disavowed. Second, the Other represents paradoxical cerning and denial of alterity. The Other, 'known' as radically external to the subject is, in fact, not an identity-to-itself, but a *position in relation* to the *Self*, empty but for the projections of the Self. This (disavowed) projection of the Self into the Other effectively negates the possibility of the knowledge of alterity -- the subject or world independent of, and structurally indifferent to, the Self (that is, another Self, for itself).

This problem of the Other was explored in the Thomas trilogy. Mrs Thing -- Isobel alienated from her bodily-self -- is unable to acknowledge the alterity of others (191), while Mrs Blood -- Isobel's bodily problematisation of subjectivity -- finds she cannot delineate her 'clean and proper' self from the endless growth and flux effected by the admission and incorporation of Otherness within herself (148). At this point it is useful to remember that in paranoia, the Other (which, as a projection of the Self's excess, may be 'read' through both the unconscious and the Law), is *bad* or problematic for the subject. In the mirror encounter, however, the other is good; it represents the ideal of the self, the object of libidinal attachment. Paranoia could be seen as positioned as a response in the 'gap' between the identification with the image (as ideal), and the 'perception' of the self *split* by the mirror. Language -- the Other -- sutures this split, and as such is not *bad* for the subject, but is the site and the sign of the subject's alienation. But language also cerns the 'self' -- produces the 'I' -- in its articulation, or Othering of the other. 'Articulation' implies a hingeing term which mediates self and other and interrupts the stasis of the dyad. Thus in my formulation, the (bad, external) Other is the product of the Othering (alienation, articulation) of the (good, desired) other.

The perception of the lack in the Other confirms the wholeness or plenitude of the perceiving subject. Therefore, Otherness must be recognised as constitutive of the (phallogentric, privileged) Self at the same time as the Self *produces* the Other. I have argued that in epistemological terms, the phallogentric Self is a colonising self, while in cultural terms, as they relate to (post-)colonial societies, Otherness is a product of the western colonial gaze -- the ambivalent *and* paranoid construct of its narcissism. The need to produce the whole(some)ness of the western colonial subject (and thus to legitimate the colonial project) requires the projection of lack on to the Other. This is homologous with the notion of 'lack' as 'noxious' for the phallus; lack of the phallus is understood as 'castration'/silence (as an absence rather than a difference). I have also suggested that the Other, produced in the colonial encounter, and constitutive of the valorised National subject of settler societies, is repressed by that National subject. Post-colonial discourses represent the 'return of the repressed'.

It is both necessary and instructive to examine the relationship of paranoia to narcissism, distinguishing between colonial and post-colonial

narcissisms in their location, or rather their si(gh)ting of the Other. In colonial narcissism, the Other is distinguished from the Self as *bad* in the sense of being not whole, or 'castrated'. By implication, the Self is whole. Just as phallocentrism defines/constitutes femininity as the (bad) lack of the phallus, an Imaginary identification, so Imaginary (specular) identifications *identify*, for example, colour, race, cultural difference, as the mark of 'castration'. However, there is another moment to this narcissism: the Other, as 'lacking', is dependent on the Self, a dependence which confirms the *value* of the Self. The narcissism of the western gaze is gratified not simply by the difference, but by the aspiration to sameness it produces but denies. For example, in *Blown Figures* we find the marketing of skin lighteners and body-building products in a manner which places the Other in the locus of (the reflection of) the Same, while retaining the phallic mark of difference (474; 496). Yet even the approach to sameness, like the approach of the arrow to the target calculated by Zeno's theorem, disturbs colonial authority.<sup>67</sup> The subject is confronted with the problem that the 'castrated' Other, who 'wants to be' the same, but cannot, represents the threat of 'castration' for the subject. As Smith argues, "however perfect, hygienic, and secure this [paranoid] system may seem with its cerning of both inside and outside, its fictional methodology . . . returns against the 'subject'."<sup>68</sup>

Post-colonial narcissism must be differently founded than National narcissism. Confronted by the constitutive splitting of the self at the colonial scene, which instigated colonial hybridity (disavowed by Nation), the Self must repair itself, reconstitute itself whole and anew. It does so by absorbing the Other -- the remainder of the split self -- back into itself, enacting a 'return' to pre-split origins, to legitimacy. Thus the Other reconfirms the self into a new, whole(some) Self. However, the effect of the whole new Self -- the truth or authenticity of identity -- is the reactivation of paranoid defence mechanisms. Not only are they reactivated, they are necessarily relocated: the bad, threatening Other must be external. This may be illustrated with reference to Australia, Canada and new Zealand as settler post-colonial societies.

As I have argued above, Nation's Others are constructs of the founding delineation of the National Self through a phallocentric, Imperialist, Imaginary order. They represent less the detumescence of the phallic Nation than its confirmation, the response to the spectacle of its desire.

For example, I pointed out in Chapter One that, in the preface to the volume of essays entitled *Culture and Identity in New Zealand*, there appeared the apology that "There are some glaring gaps in this book. We regret the absence of chapters on Maori-Pakeha relations, on working-class culture . . . and contributions from Maori women, from Pacific Islanders, from lesbian feminists, all of which were originally planned for inclusion."<sup>69</sup> What I suggested to be remarkable here was the security with which these 'absences' were identified as absent 'presences'; as if the (w)hole were knowable in terms of the desire of the part. Further, however, the image of the 'glaring gap' points to the perception of the feminine 'nothing-to-be-seen' which activates masculine anxiety regarding castration. In other words, such ideal completion would provide Nation with its feminine object of desire, and in perceiving the feminine desire for, or lack of, the phallus of signification or Symbolisation, would confirm Nation's status as possessor of the phallus.

Therefore, *post-colonial* national discourse strengthens its claim to legitimacy through 'fuller' representation, and to ethical integrity through the self-representation of its constituent Others. However, its integrity is also located in the fact that these identities belong to the order of the Same, determined by the phallogentric Imperial-National Imaginary. For example, it is that order which projects and reflects identities of race, colour, gender, sexuality, class and so on, founded on its perception of the unitary Self, and the negative but also unified Other. It would appear, then, that the failure of inclusion is more troubling to a discourse of nation seeking redemption, than the flattery of its narcissistic gaze which enables it to reflect a fuller, more desirable self.

The new, redeemed post-colonial nation, where the post-colonised are represented and the post-colonisers are authenticated, speaks for identity, integrity, autonomy, self-representation, the value of the specific and the local, and the value of history, as that narrative of progress(iveness) towards the just inclusion of previously omitted identities. In this formulation, post-colonial discourse stands for the delimitation of the boundaries of legitimate cultural activity. In its own security of identity, threats to that identity are necessarily projected as external. This could be termed the 'paranoid' moment of post-colonial discourse, the "dual

passage between self-affirmation and self-defense."<sup>70</sup> For example, Laura Mulvey has argued that

The question of Canadian national identity is political in the most direct sense of the word, and it brings the political together with the cultural and ideological issues immediately and inevitably. For the Canada delineated by multinational, international finance, U.S. economic and political imperialism, national identity is a point of resistance, defining the border fortifications against exterior colonial penetration.<sup>71</sup>

Similarly in the Introduction to *Culture and Identity in New Zealand*, referred to earlier, Willmott argues that New Zealand "can either succumb to increasing economic and cultural dependence . . . or it can begin to develop a sense of autonomous identity that unites our people in opposing internal exploitation of the disadvantaged and external exploitation by the mighty."<sup>72</sup> While the external threat to identity is figured in political and economic terms as neo-imperialism, post-modernism is frequently (though arguably) identified as its cultural moment. During has argued that "The play of passions that we call postcolonial . . . wish[es] once and for all to name and disclaim postmodernism as neo-imperialist."<sup>73</sup>

Relations between post-colonialism and post-modernism have been expressed in terms of radical spatial and strategic separateness. Slemon refers to "the major fault-lines that run[] between them,"<sup>74</sup> while Helen Tiffin locates them in terms of "*European* post-modernism and *Euro-American* post-structuralism," as opposed to post-colonial "cultures and texts *outside Europe*."<sup>75</sup> Along with spatial or geographic separation, post-colonial critics refer to those of strategy. Slemon claims that post-modernist theory and post-colonial criticism have remained more or less separate in their strategies and foundational assumptions,<sup>76</sup> while Arun Mukherjee, who identifies post-modernism as "largely a white European cultural phenomenon,"<sup>77</sup> argues that "the postmodernist label does not apply to texts of native and African-American women."<sup>78</sup> Thus in post-colonial discourse (about post-colonialism) a certain morphology of the Self is suggested: post-colonialism is bounded, whole, unique, and autonomous. It represents here, inside, and identity, while post-modernism belongs there, outside, and is a threat to identity *from outside*.

The unnegotiable closure of the borders between 'self' and 'other' has been described by Smith in terms of the 'claustrophilic' tendencies of paranoia. However he goes on to note that "the importance of these symptoms . . . is that they absolutely depend upon an initial opening of those spheres, an opening which is the threat they themselves are designated to ward off."<sup>79</sup> Such an initial opening may be posited at the moment of the colonial encounter, when the very constitution of 'self' and 'other' is inseparable from their mutual contamination by each other, producing colonial cultural hybridity. Further, and more specifically in relation to settler post-colonialism, it could be suggested that the cultural scene was opened to post-modernism from the moment of emergence of a dominant capitalist order which, from the modern project of national development through to the post-modern elision of national boundaries as effective economic and cultural designators of identity, projected the impossibility of retaining such economic and cultural separateness from the centres of trade and military power. This post-colonial insistence on the post-modern as 'not-self' may be seen as a defence or disavowal of the self's implication in it.

## 7. VI. Post-Modernism as Abject for Post-Colonialism.

As Smith has noted, the "fictional methodology . . . [of paranoia] returns against the 'subject,'" and there are moments in post-colonial discourse in which post-modernism, even as it is being radically externalised from the post-colonial Self, can be found already to have contaminated it from an undecidable position inside and outside the Self. Thus, post-modernism may also be recognised as *abject* for post-colonialism, invoking Kristeva's description of abjection as, for instance, "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite."<sup>80</sup> Further, she explains,

The abjection of self would be the culminating form of that experience of the subject to which it is revealed that all its objects are based merely on the inaugural loss that laid the foundations of its own being. . . . [A]ll abjection is in fact recognition of the want on which any being, meaning, language, or desire is founded.<sup>81</sup>

It can be shown in relation to post-colonialism that the 'loss' and the 'want' are those of the *body* (of heterogeneity or alterity which signify the



impurity and implication of the Self) upon whose exclusion phallogentric/Imperial subjectivity is predicated.

It becomes necessary to acknowledge those abject moments in the debate, including within the terms of specific contributions, which indicate an *encounter*, one which cannot be so clearly or cleanly contained -- or prevented -- by oppositional structures. Linda Hutcheon refers to the "problematic site of interaction"<sup>82</sup> between the post-modern and the post-colonial, naming this site variously a "playground" and a "battlefield."<sup>83</sup> Similarly, Slemon acknowledges "an on-going critical struggle" between them with regard to the "contested terrain" of textual interpretation.<sup>84</sup> Even Simon During's suggestion that "postcolonialism is to be viewed quite simply as a resistance to postmodernism,"<sup>85</sup> points to the persistence of a relation, determined by the abject fact that (the issue of) post-modernism keeps returning, threatening the 'clean and proper' self of post-colonialism with its excess(iveness). Therefore, its expulsion becomes a matter of continual process, rather than a once-and-for-all event. Further, this compromises the claim to autonomy of post-colonialism; rather, its status as the Ideal Symbolic body must be viewed as the effect of its repeated assertion.

The site of interaction between post-colonialism and post-modernism is problematic because it consists of ambiguously inside/outside 'rims' on the 'body' of post-colonial nations, cultures, discourses, or texts. The expulsions of the post-modern confirm the permeability of its boundaries and the inefficacy of their existing formulation. For example, Tiffin argues that

Given the extent to which European postmodernism and Euro-American post-structuralism have increasingly invested in cultural relativity as a term in some of their most radical insights, it is ironic that the label of 'post-modern' is increasingly being applied hegemonically to cultures and texts outside Europe, assimilating post-colonial works whose political orientations and experimental formations have been deliberately designed to counteract such European appropriation.<sup>86</sup>

Along with spatial oppositions, we have here the defensive/offensive oppositions of post-colonial victim and post-modern aggressor. Yet the argument continues with the suggestion that these post-colonial works "have themselves provided the cultural base and formative colonial

experience on which European philosophers have drawn in their apparent radicalisation of linguistic philosophy."<sup>87</sup> It is therefore necessary to examine the source of apparent failure of the defences (intentions, strategies) suggested here. What I suggest will be found is a complicity of the *structuring* of the post-colonial Self in its vulnerability to the incursions of the post-modern Other.

Three discursive 'rims' which compromise the integrity of post-colonial discourse and identity (whether of an entire culture or, for example, a specific text), three discursive points of the incursion and expulsion of the abject represented by post-modernism, and *in* post-colonial discourse *about* post-modernism, are the notions of desire (and the ambivalence of seduction), appearance, and strategy. Post-colonial discourse is at its most abject when located on, or faced with, these rims of undecidability.

First, as Tiffin argues, "while Euro-American post-structuralist theories offer exciting possibilities to post-colonial theoreticians, it would be dangerous if they were accepted without rigorous interrogation from post-colonial perspectives."<sup>88</sup> However, as well as the unquestionable need for such interrogation, I argue that there is a need to interrogate just as rigorously the source of desirability or attraction held by such theories, and also the structuring of post-colonial perspectives themselves. For example, in this construction of the post-colonial subject or theoretician as the desiring (and thus incomplete and non-autonomous) subject, are we directed towards recognition of the legacy of separation from a 'cultural' *chora* of un-Self-conscious undifferentiation? Do post-structuralist theories evoke more primal or original desires, reaching back to a cultural plenitude and heterogeneity, and the tension of their loss in the construction of the unitary subject? Is the desire the *dependence* of the subject on the recognition of the Other? On the other hand, the desiring subject is an active subject and thus less amenable to description as passive victim.

There have been a number of expressions of post-modern *seduction* of post-colonialism. There is also, in such contexts, frequently a conflation of the 'post-modern' with some notion of the 'American way of life', the latter generally a short-hand for consumerism and represented in the spread of American popular culture. In one explicit example, it has been

claimed from a New Zealand perspective, that "For many people in the world, the American way of life, even with all its inequalities, is highly attractive -- one may say seductive."<sup>89</sup> However, as Jane Gallop points out, "as with all seductions, the question of complicity poses itself. The dichotomy active/passive is always equivocal in seduction."<sup>90</sup> Initially, it may seem scandalous to suggest post-colonial complicity. After all, there are so many assertions of post-colonial propriety, resistance, and boundaries *against* post-modern incursion (or "penetration" as Mulvey put it). Arun Mukherjee expresses her support for "the objections raised by the post-colonial critics against post-modernist readings of non-European texts."<sup>91</sup> She points out that post-colonial writers "want us to believe the truth claims of the history they themselves are providing,"<sup>92</sup> a point also made by Slemon, who differentiates the "mimetic or referential purchase" of [post-colonial] textuality from -- and against -- ungrounded post-modern claims of the "constructedness of *all* textuality."<sup>93</sup> However, it could be suggested that post-colonial discourse is seductive to post-modernism precisely because of the closed, innocent body it presents; that, to cite Slemon again, "postmodernism *needs* its (post-)colonial Others in order to constitute or to frame its narrative of referential fracture."<sup>94</sup> At the same time, though, post-colonial national/cultural discourse asserts its purity and innocence in relation to the advances of post-modernism, and so there is a mutuality in which post-colonialism must at least concede that it displays the very terms -- history, representation, truth -- that post-modernism most consistently violates.

Second, discussions of the relation between post-colonial and post-modern textuality are often forced to acknowledge the *appearance* of similarity in their strategies. Mukherjee refers to "antirealist representation, parody, auto-referentiality, problematizing of history,"<sup>95</sup> but warns that "surface similarities may turn out to be deceptive since the semiotic codes of cultures are often not interchangeable. . . . [W]hat may seem postmodernist and new to cultural outsiders may seem quite ordinary and traditional to those from within a culture."<sup>96</sup> In this case, while she suggests an undecidable quality of textuality, amenable to different readings, the recourse is to a cultural insider whose authorial intentions or privileged reading casts others as intrusive or invasive. Yet we have already seen the apparent inefficacy of intentions and deliberate strategies in preventing such transgressive readings. Slemon makes the similar observation that "Hutcheon's framing of the postmodern field is

important, for the general textual practice she defines . . . resembles -- at least on the surface -- the kind of reiterative textual energy which . . . marks out an especially interesting moment within a broadly post-colonial literary activity."<sup>97</sup> Thus he is required to call on depths or intentions to differentiate them. Again I would argue the need to interrogate the position from which that which *looks the same* may be *revealed as different*. It requires a securely centred identity, one which points to the entrapment, or possibly even complicity of that identity in the terms of the Symbolic field of the Other from which it is articulated. As During has noted, "the postcolonial self knows itself in universal terms, that is, in terms of the international centres of a colonial past. Yet the images and texts it produces as 'its own' can affect it as if they have have passed through no 'external detour', no world which is not their own."<sup>98</sup> The implications of this may be clarified by moving on to the third of these 'rims of abjection'.

Post-colonial discourses variously characterise post-modernism as totalising, assimilative, appropriative, neo-universalising, and neo-imperialist, while post-colonial cultural authenticity and specificity are posited as target-objects and victims of such energies. Mukherjee complains of post-colonial replication of these very energies when she states that she finds "the proprietary tendencies of the post-colonial critics with regard to 'post-colonial work' equally problematic."<sup>99</sup> As well as differentiating *between* post-colonial societies, she points to differences *within*, such as those between "the experiences of white and non-white post-colonials,"<sup>100</sup> and argues that "post-colonial societies . . . have their own internal centres and peripheries, their own dominants and marginals."<sup>101</sup> She specifies race, class, gender, language, religion, ethnicity and political affiliation. While such identities or positions constitute the basis of exploitation and oppression, as sites of resistance, they may function to circumscribe or limit the possibilities of forging truly decolonised relations. They may concentrate critical and activist energies into themselves as if they were natural, original identities, and not the *products* of an Imaginary order which constructed the dominant National subject they contest. It is therefore worth considering the *appeal* of post-colonial counter-discourses to post-colonising institutions, the way in which they are often too easily appropriated and assimilated by the very structures and discourses they seek to challenge.

It could be argued that like post-modernism, post-colonialism has its own moments of neo-universalising, not so much in the use of the term 'post-colonial' to refer to a range of different cultural contexts and products, but rather in the positing of one true post-colonial voice, the authentic post-colonial subject, thus eliding both the complexity of subjectivity in settler post-colonial cultures, and the multiplicity of subject-positions in relation to their histories of colonisation.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, it is necessary to acknowledge that settler post-colonial discourses of resistance to the structures of power and subjectivity which informed nationalism tend, in their attempts to recuperate 'nation' as a viable cultural and political structure, to replicate -- or at least supplement -- the discursive structures they putatively oppose. There is the danger that, through the commodification of discourses or symbols of identity and authenticity, these 'values' are lent to the project of post-colonising cultural legitimisation; they are emptied of specificity and circulated as signifiers in an exchange of indifference. This may even be the result of sincere intentions to include previously unrepresented otherness. For example, During argues with regard to the rapturous reception in New Zealand of Keri Hulme's *The Bone People*, and "the desire of New Zealand to see a reconciliation of its postcolonising and postcolonised discourses," that "The reconciliation is achieved, but the price of that success is that the otherness of the Maori is destroyed."<sup>103</sup> Therefore, when Tiffin suggests that the indigenous writers of, for example, Australia and New Zealand "are able to challenge European perspectives with their own metaphysical systems," while the non-indigenous writers may enact "subversive manoeuvres from within European positions,"<sup>104</sup> it is necessary to acknowledge both the efficacy of the specification of these *positionalities*, and the inextricable mutual implication of each in the other in the settler post-colonial context.

Linda Hutcheon may therefore be wrong in her apparently persuasive argument that

The current post-structuralist/postmodern challenges to the coherent, autonomous subject have to be put on hold in feminist and post-colonial discourses, for both must work first to assert and affirm a denied or alienated subjectivity: those radical postmodern challenges are in many ways the luxury of the dominant order which can afford to challenge what it securely possesses.<sup>105</sup>

Part of the appeal of such an argument lies in its isomorphism with dominant historical narratives of continuous progress, in which each 'stage' is both 'self-evident' and supposedly indispensable, toward a commonly agreed goal. Instead, post-colonial and feminist discourses are in a position to expose the alienation -- from the body, its heterogeneity and desire -- of *all* subjectivity founded in the dominant western-humanist valorisation of identity. They are in a position to infiltrate phallic Sameness with their disruptive excess. Rather than erecting and reasserting more and more defensive boundaries against transgressive desires, it would be useful to extend Tiffin's formulation of a clearly unacceptable position for post-colonial cultures as "a peripheral term in Europe's self-questioning,"<sup>106</sup> to discover the opportunity for actively using post-modern challenges in post-colonialism's Self-questioning. By retaining a perspective on post-colonialism which names the difference within the self which refuses to be unified and absorbed, which will always exceed totalising impulses, post-colonialism will more successfully resist the absorption of a promised, redemptive difference into the same, emptying it into the mere signifier of that difference. In other words, if a post-colonial culture or text is not the same as itself, it resists being made the same as its Other.

As Gallop argues, "Perhaps any text can be read as either body (site of contradictory drives and heterogeneous matter) or Law,"<sup>107</sup> and I would argue that many current formulations of post-colonial discourse are grounded in Law. The question then becomes, whose Law is it, and further, what is lost in the "tendency to accept a traditional, unified, rational, puritanical self -- a self supposedly free from the violence of desire"?<sup>108</sup> What is lost is the body -- the specificity and difference post-colonialism claims to name -- in the "clean and proper . . . fully symbolic" body which bears "no trace of its debt to nature."<sup>109</sup>

## 7. VII. Against the Identity of the Text.

Throughout this thesis, and in a more condensed form in this chapter, I have argued the hybridity, abjection, paranoia and contamination of the phallogocentric subject of identity as it attempts to speak through the post-colonial condition, whether it speaks an 'individual', racial, cultural, gender, class, or even a national subjectivity. I have argued the need to re-think the structures of subjectivity through which post-colonial discourse

produces and articulates positions, to enable an agency which strategically negotiates irreducible difference. In other words, rather than identity, I have focused on strategies of positionality which acknowledge the interpellations *and* the resistances, the politics and the desires, the Symbolic legitimacy and the heterogeneous excess, of the 'subject'. I now argue that the (post-colonial) literary text may be considered as such a complex and contradictory 'subject', and that consequently it has no essential *identity*, but rather, requires the assumption of agency through the practices of reading if its discursive dynamics -- or slippage -- are to be momentarily halted to *effect*.

This may be illustrated with reference to Ian Wedde's *Symmes Hole*,<sup>110</sup> and to the question of textual identity posed in terms of the post-colonial/post-modern opposition discussed and problematised above. In short, my intention is to explore the problems of the question, Is *Symmes Hole* a post-modern or a post-colonial text? I want to show that the question, based on the oppositional model of identity, is ultimately as self-defeating in this (post-colonial New Zealand) context as it is in more generally critical cultural discourse. *Symmes Hole* challenges the possibility of thinking in these terms, as Williams argues: "It is a mistake to categorise Wedde within the descriptions post-modernism, modernism, post-colonialism. He belongs wholly to none of them, although each is present in his writing."<sup>111</sup> Certainly to reduce the text to any one of these 'identities' would be reductive, but the issue is more complex than one of an admixture of two or more of them -- as well as others such as anti-modernism, nationalism, parochialism.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, any or all of these *may* characterise facets of specific *post-colonial* discourses. Rather, *Symmes Hole* serves as an example of the need to dismantle the monolithicity of the terms post-modern and post-colonial themselves, in order to produce certain moments of its critical textual strategies.

In unpacking the terms post-modernism and post-colonialism we may discover the possibility for more complex relations than opposition or identity within and between them in late twentieth-century post-colonialism. The fact that I continue to use the term 'post-colonialism' demonstrates that such dismantling does not seek to empty it of significance, to deny it critical purchase, but on the contrary to point to its irreducible diversity and to invest it with flexible agency. Freed from the stasis of the binary opposition of post-modernism and post-colonialism,

the text may be read in terms of its articulation of a problematic and a critique, its flexibility and efficacy in producing multiple intersections between them, as textual features are specified *in relation* for their effects: in short, the text as productive of agency, not mortgaged to identity.

Because I have attempted to demonstrate and explore the multiple and contradictory character of post-colonialism throughout this thesis, preceding discussion may, for now, be relegated to the position of 'backdrop' against which I examine some dismantlings of post-modernism. I shall then return to specify, in relation to the post-modern, the post-colonial moments which have informed my argument. This is a strategic gesture which, as at the beginning of the chapter, is intended to problematise the very autonomy that post-colonial discourses are inclined to invoke -- while granting them a particular force of specificity.

Symptomatic of the need to dismantle the monolithicity of 'post-modernism' as posited in its opposition to post-colonialism, is the critical disagreement among its commentators as to whether it names an aesthetic genre or style -- and if so, whether it is optimistic, celebratory, even liberatory,<sup>113</sup> or trivial, misdirected and to be lamented,<sup>114</sup> -- or whether it is a period term which "turns directly towards the state of Western culture either to describe the contours of popular and mass media expression or to highlight the cultural manifestations ('commodifications') of the most recent stage in the history of its industrial-economic infrastructure."<sup>115</sup> Although rarely a celebratory understanding, this conception is variously and very differently critiqued on neo-Marxist grounds by, for example, Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton,<sup>116</sup> and by writers for whom it names the "culture for which all master-narratives have decayed and ceased to grip," and the emergence of "a sweeping overview of the NOW," depthless and historyless.<sup>117</sup>

The notion of 'two archives', however, raises the problem of a relation between them: it cannot simply be a matter of one more 'accurately' describing or defining post-modernism, at least not without the specification of a (third) position from which such a judgement may be made. For example, even when understood in terms of the 'totalising energies of late capitalism', a position paradoxically outside of these is posited, from which this character may be known, and indeed critiqued. There is still, in other words, within some form of discontinuity within



the concept itself, a space for agency. While Baudrillard would seem to deny it,<sup>118</sup> post-colonialism, feminism, class analysis and so on, do position themselves, however successfully or convincingly, in active relation to post-modernism, to search for strategic compatibilities *and* to mount critiques. They therefore insist upon the need to transcend the stasis of theoretical opposition, and to theorise agency. Nevertheless, even the ultimately stultifying 'relation' of opposition attests to the non-unity of, or discontinuity within, the post-modern. Therefore, I believe it is not a matter of whether post-modernism *is* ludic *or* apocalyptic, liberatory or totalising, adversarial or complicit in relation to the oppressive master-narratives, or late capitalism's totalising energies. Rather, it is a matter of seeing that post-modernism comprises moments which, while neither unified or autonomous in themselves, allow for more or less flexible articulation of any number of these characteristics. But the question remains, how?

Wilson argues that the 'two archives' "overlap and coincide. They form this nexus not only because they appeal to some of the same evidence, but also because whatever becomes evidence (for either archive) can be analyzed in both ways."<sup>119</sup> Perhaps an example would be the 'evidence' of post-modern 'difference' or 'otherness': does this attest to the liberation of minority subjectivities or discourses from oppressive master-narratives, or to a cultural or discursive pluralism which, in its indifference, re-inscribes sameness? Again the need for agency has been invoked, but its space remains unspecified. Simon During refuses post-modernism the status of a cultural dominant, and proceeds to differentiate 'post-modern thought' -- which provides a space for otherness (and which corresponds approximately to Wilson's culture-aesthetic archive) -- from 'post-modernity' -- which, as the cultural outcome of the totalising energies of late capital, denies 'otherness' (and corresponds, again approximately, to Wilson's period-term archive).<sup>120</sup> Thus the difference is not simply one of value, but is ontological, like sexual difference, beyond the positive-negative, specular-reflective model, and beyond the reductive tendency for one to become the derived manifestation of the other, primary realm.<sup>121</sup>

However, for that difference to be articulated, a third term is required, one which fulfills a syntactic rather than a semantic function; which not only establishes a dynamic between the two, but which instigates an

economy of exchangeability such that post-colonialism or feminism, for example, may enter the relation and disrupt the self-sufficient inevitable moments of post-modernism with their subversive questions. Therefore, I find Frow's three-term analysis of post-modernism ontologically and methodologically illuminating for post-colonialism, while it enables a *relation between* post-modernism and post-colonialism.

Grounding his argument in the concept of the 'modern', Frow points to the value of distinguishing between three conceptual moments:

*modernism* (a bundle of cultural practices, some of them adversarial); *modernization* (an economic process with social and cultural implications); and *modernity* (which overlaps with the modernization process, but which I understand as a philosophical category designating the temporality of the post-traditional world). The same distinction of ontological levels holds good, *mutatis mutandis*, for post-modernism, post-modernization, and post-modernity.<sup>122</sup>

He is concerned to point out that these moments are not autonomous, the point being, rather "to make possible their more complex and contradictory articulation."<sup>123</sup> Further, apart from overlap, there is internal differentiation, suggested in the description of post-modern cultural practices, *some of which* are adversarial, so that some of which are *not*. It would clearly be problematic to attribute an 'identity' to the post-modern.

Of his three moments, Frow grants priority to (post-)modernisation, which more than the others, takes on the character of *process*.<sup>124</sup> It would not be appropriate here to rehearse the constitutive features of modernisation and post-modernisation identified by Frow. However, it is important for this argument to note that, of the aspects of post-modernisation, he identifies as the key one that which "describes the increasing integration of the aesthetic . . . into the marketing of commodities,"<sup>125</sup> while at the same time, "the integrating tendencies of a regime of flexible specialization affect not only the relations between cultural and economic production, but also the spatial ordering of production."<sup>126</sup> It is here that the space of potential subversion of post-modern totalising energies may be found; that is, a space for post-colonialism to enter the relation, for

The salient features of a post-Fordist regime are . . . those which concern the rapidity of motion of capital between nations and sectors, its ability to set nations and regions in competition against each other, and its ability to undercut the price and conditions of labour by means of extraterritorialization. . . . [B]ut against this movement should be balanced the reverse process by which sweatshops and outworking systems based on migrant and female labour are established in the heart of metropolitan society.

The result of this new speed and flexibility of capital is neither a colonial order of direct domination nor a neo-colonial order of indirect domination of one nation-state by another, but a world system -- which we might call precisely 'post-colonial' -- in which dominance is exercised by international capital through the agency of dominant nation-states and regions *but in large part independently of their control*.<sup>127</sup>

I have cited Frow's argument at length because it suggests three points crucial to this stage of my argument: it points to the vulnerability within the post-modern, located in a constitutive paradox, or discontinuity -- that of the increasing centralisation *and* dispersal of capital -- in its principal moment; it locates the post-colonial, not outside or innocent of the processes of post-modernisation, but as *implicated*; and at the same time it opens a space for the functioning of the local, post-colonial culture as 'resistance' to the assimilative energies of the post-modern, a space located by the phrase I have emphasised above.

I will treat the first of these as an enabling condition for the consideration of the second and third, prior to dismantling 'post-colonialism' itself, so that it is not reduced to the sole status of "a peripheral term in Europe's self-questioning,"<sup>128</sup> but is active in a process of mutual engagement and critique. With regard to the implication of post-colonialism in post-modernism, it would seem a remarkable historical elision, in relation to Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, to view Europe and America as radically 'Other' to their local cultural selves. As During has pointed out, post-colonial discourses of authenticity and identity, whose which challenge Eurocentric hegemony, are constructed in ways that are accessible only after (in the manner of) Europe itself.<sup>129</sup> Even post-colonial societies, in the late twentieth-century, cannot avoid taking their place within the economic, social and cultural structures of late capitalism. Indeed, with its concomitant consumerism and media-technology saturation, this cultural-economic era defies, and tends towards the increasing obsolescence of, national boundaries in comparison with

multi-national corporations, trade conglomerates, and economic and defence pacts. It becomes increasingly problematic for even the post-colonial nations to assert themselves as singular and separate from the world systems in which they must participate.

However, it is in post-colonial societies that questions of cultural difference are foregrounded; questions which may serve to limit the proliferation of plural post-modern micro-narratives, and to shore up against the global wave of cultural indifference serving the interests of the spread of first-world commodity markets. So post-colonialism may function, through its constitutive discourses and cultural practices, as resistance, while at the same time being to some extent complicit in post-modernisation. It is therefore necessary to specify constitutive moments of post-colonialism, which like Frow's post-modern, are neither unified nor autonomous. Now, while his three-term analysis is useful to the framing of a similarly articulable account of the post-colonial, there can be no direct translation from one to the other. While appearing to name something similar on different terrain, the untranslatability is paramount. With this reservation, I suggest it is useful to differentiate

\* *post-colonial discourses, cultural products and practices* (cf. post-modernism), which are always already hybrid, but which make variously allied, or competing and contradictory claims to identity and authenticity, and which could be seen as the building blocks of

\* *post-colonialism* (cf. post-modernity), the state of a newly avowed cultural hybridity which abjects its constitutive claims to identity, and poses the need to re-think (cultural) agency beyond the failures of 'identity'; and

\* *post-colonisation* (cf. post-modernisation), the 'problematic' which has been addressed in this thesis, and which refers to the discursive/cultural/political process which constitutes a repetition, in post-colonialism, of the colonial encounter, with re-energised terms of cultural difference.

This third term, to which I have granted priority of concern in my analysis, requires further expansion. It is a moment of re-inscription in all constitutive discourses or practices, comprising in discourses from 'post-colonised' subject-positions, the element of displacement, as these discourses are submitted to the post-colonising Symbolic Law in the *positive* projects of resistance and contestation -- the positing of new post-colonial 'knowledges'; and in discourses from the post-colonisers' subject-

position, the moment of (re)appropriation of the *place* of the (post-) colonised, in the projects of legitimation and authentication. Thus, like Frow's post-modernisation, it could be understood further as an *economic* process. Cultural and national 'identity' and affect, place and authenticity, become separated from 'origins' or 'reality', and commodified to the extent that they have entered a discursive economy. The positivity with which post-colonial discourses construct subjectivity is compromised by, but is also complicit in, the appropriation of these subject-positions by those who perceive their promise of 'authentic legitimacy' (a symptomatically contradictory post-colonial desire). However, what is purchased is not authenticity or identity, but the simulacra of these.<sup>130</sup>

Post-colonialism thereby emerges as an abject state which thrusts the bodily agent -- the contaminated, hybrid 'subject' -- into the foreground. It is through the desires and discontinuities of agency that moments of post-modernism and post-colonialism may be partially, strategically, detached from others to produce post-colonial discourse in critique of post-modernisation, using post-modern textual strategies which in turn question the post-colonising assumption of an innocent, autonomous self.

When referring to 'post-colonial' discourses or concerns, it is important (and at the same time fraught with difficulties), to note that in settler post-colonialism, the concerns for identity, authenticity, and local autonomy are differently constructed in the different constitutive discourses. Their subject-positions are broadly identifiable as those of the 'post-colonised' and those of the 'post-colonisers'. At the same time, these must be recognised as positions of agency, not identity, or subjectivity in any sense that disavows hybridity. Nevertheless, it is obvious that 'post-colonised' projects of political and cultural 'self-determination' are fundamentally different, and in many ways opposed, to post-colonisers' projects of self-legitimation, self-authentication, and the construction of a newly inclusive (legitimizing, authenticating) *national* identity. In this sense, *Symmes Hole* addresses anxieties which conform to the position of the 'post-coloniser', locating these within the abjection of the post-colonial (national) subject of identity.

From the beginning of the novel, the ideal purity of identity is engulfed by the reality of constitutive contamination, prompting the quest motif: the search for and reassertion of purity of time (the discrete

distinctions of past, present and future), place (the cultural authenticity and specificity of New Zealand in the 1980s, and the sense of belonging threatened by a problematic history and the current incursions of the non-local), and identity (the isomorphism of the form of the self with the purity of time and place). The Researcher-protagonist records the abjection of the nation through the 'physical body' of its major islands: he observes "That rim of slime around the mussel rocks, where the sewer pipe outfall is, out from Picton ... scum on top of the broth of memory" (18). The North and South Islands expel into the strait between, for the "shit-eating barracouta," the 'foreign' threat to identity, represented by "the bobbing rejectamenta of the fast-food franchises whose liverish breath leaks out into Picton's commercial centre...." (18), and by money, as "he sees barracouta lunging for turds the colour of old pennies . . . [as] the peristaltic squeeze of tides pushes him out at Tory Channel" (19). So the Researcher himself is (the) abject, "remembering the sour taste of the brown coin, his mother's injunction not to put it in his mouth, it was dirty! Right!" (18). He is drawn towards an indifference of past and present, the 'real' and its signification, as he contemplates "that other sewer outfall, a whole city's shit, the Wellington City pipe at *Moa Point*, no kidding! ... the City Council Names Committee doesn't lose any sleep over that one; with a history as episodic our we're told ours is, the naming of a sewer outfall after an extinct bird doesn't even strike most people as funny" (18-19). Thus the moa, an indigenous cultural signifier, is apparently simultaneously dead and alive, extinct and present, 'real' and the signification of the 'real', the signifier of purity (cultural authenticity) and contamination (a sewer pipe outfall). As the Researcher notes, "no episode is ever closed: the moa still shits" (19).

The convergence of past and present into a murky 'now' continues to abject the 'clean and proper' body of the Researcher, now in the disturbing, attractive-repulsive, *unheimlich* reappearance(s) of the colonial New Zealand writer, Katherine Mansfield. He contemplates the Cook Strait ferry in terms of the image of "'the little steamer all hung with bright beads' plying back and forth between the arseholes of 'the present,'" anticipating the 'reappearance' of Mansfield herself at a 1980s literary function held in the Parliamentary Beehive. Her 'presence' is affectively ambivalent for the Researcher: she has a "beautiful, self-pitying sadist's mouth" (39), and is productive of a subjective-temporal vertigo: "Is she the one who writes stories?" His bright eyes stared after her, a slim dark

woman, she walked away so coolly, yet ... and the way she turned, then ... her chin raised just a little ... she was *perfect*. There could never be .... 'But I thought she ...' (41). The Researcher is stricken with nausea, vomiting repeatedly at the incursions of the past into the present, and vice versa, (39; 45; 46). Indeed, this confusion is integral to the structuring of the novel, as suggested when the second, 'historical' strand of the narrative, which begins with numerous references to prawn-eating (20; 23; 24; 34; 35), to "the reek of hot prawn" (37), and the "taste [of] prawn through Gobblechops's grog" (38), is followed immediately by the description of the 1980s literary supper: "'Last time I was here they had prawns ...', whining, 'crumbed, king-praw'....' The canapé burst against the roof of his mouth releasing a sac of, warm fishy cat's vomit?" (39).

This abjection of identity prompts parallel searches for the pure and innocent (national) self, two journeys towards (two senses of) home in New Zealand in the late twentieth century. One of these involves the Researcher's exorcising the guilt and 'inauthenticity' of a colonial past (thus re-securing legitimate belonging for the post-colonisers), by tracing 'true' national origins back to the whaling past, the terms of which settlement are constructed as 'natural' in binary opposition to the 'unnatural' project of Wakefieldian colonisation. The narrative focused on whaler James 'Worser' Heberley is structured in terms of oppositional binary values defining the unofficial settlers who arrived and stayed in New Zealand as a result of contact effected by whaling, and the official settlers sanctioned by Wakefield's scheme of systematic colonisation. The fundamental opposition between these two types of settler and two bases of settlement is evoked in the irreconcilable differences of terminology for each other. While Heberley refers to beach people like himself as "us old settlers" (206), Wakefield and his followers refer to them as "a new people" (197), a phrase that would continue trouble and threaten Heberley. On the other hand, Wakefield's people are the imperially sanctioned "settlers," while Heberley refers to them as "Wakefield's mob" (207). However, within the terms of the post-colonial project, Heberley enjoys what Dr Keehua Roa, in the Introduction, calls the "natural terms of his occupancy" before the threat of "unnatural colonisation"(12).

The underlying oppositions of 'natural' to 'unnatural' inform this entire aspect of the narrative. Heberley's settlement is predicated on the terms of fulfillment of 'natural' needs and desires, as John Guard has

promised him, "'When you step ashore, you'll take a house there'll be a woman to look after you, you can fish just offshore in them sounds *huge* bluecod Heberley just pull the buggers in throw the catch on the beach be ready for you when you get back'" (58). Gradually shortened to "woman, house, a home" (103), this formulation echoes throughout Heberley's 'narrative'. It is the antithesis of the artificiality of Wakefield's 'systematic colonisation', and indeed the very unplanned character of Heberley's, and other beach people's new life, "the life that had chosen them" (107), is posited as 'natural' as opposed to history's self-deluding proactive march forward. Heberley's life is characterised by his physical and social absorption into his new environment, so that "by the time he'd lain down in his own plain whare at night and slept till dawn without remembering a dream, and by the time he'd almost got used to the name *Worser* -- well, by *then* it was as though he'd forgotten that Guard had ever tricked him!" (217). Wakefield's scheme, on the other hand, constitutes the imposition of a foreign physical and social model on to unknown and different landscape, a landscape upon which his people appear grossly -- unnaturally -- out of place. Heberley sees "Colonel Wakefield flapping his arms, his head jerking about as if he expected to see a populous town rise out of the ground before his very eyes, English gardens of droopy elms on the outskirts. . . ./... he felt contempt for them. The Colonel's vision . . . was just plain daft" (191).

The Colonel and his people do not only look, but sound out of place. Whereas Heberley's homecoming is signalled in his linguistic adaption, including the acceptance of a new name, conferred by 'natural' chance and the 'authenticity' of place (138), the linguistic inappropriateness of the Wakefield planners with their middle-class English idiom is a source of mirth and contempt for Heberley: "'Eggs? By Jove ... fresh eggs? ... capital ... splendid!'" He remarks, "funny how *gentlemen* shouted even more than common folk -- even when they was only talking they spoke up like that" (194). Heberley's social place in his new home is founded on his understanding of the priority of the indigenous inhabitants, his recognition of the condition, "You're on probation, Pakeha" (192), and the protocol that "'I take my wife's people's part'" (206). Wakefield, on the contrary, "believed he was obtaining rights, not licences" (192). This difference extends to their respective attitudes to the land, which Heberley understands as profoundly historical, already meaningful, "steeped in human blood", so that "it didn't belong to anyone" (192), despite



Wakefield's purchases. Similarly, the Wakefield approach to land is exemplified by "Edward Jerningham Wakefield, nephew of the colonel, same lad that set fire to a whole mountainside of virgin forest in the Pelorus Sound winter of 1839 because he wanted to see what a *really* big blaze looked like" (79).

Heberley and Wakefield each represent a threat to the other. Heberley has cause to dread the implications of the Wakefield scheme for his and his family's survival: "he didn't take the Colonel seriously but that clown might be towing something bad -- . . . the bad would land on the Maori first and on the likes of him and Barrett next. And what about his little chaps, and his daughter, and his wife? ... and old Ngarewa, and ... ?" (205). While Heberley is aware of their status as the 'expendable scum', the inadmissible Other of English society abjected to the colonies as the imperial garbage dump, Wakefield also perceives them as irritants to the integrity and success of systematic colonisation. As Dr Keehua Roa explains in the Introduction, "the beach people might drive a subversive wedge between exploitable territory and colonial ideal" (8). This is precisely the potential that *Symmes Hole* seeks to explore. Diana Brydon might just as easily have been referring to *Symmes Hole* when she wrote that "The 'effluvium' of British slums bring a tough cultural specificity to [the colony] that Britain rejected but our writers now embrace. This turning the tables on those who think they have you where they want you, this transvaluation of values is part of the post-colonial literary strategy that clears a space for history's silenced ones to speak."<sup>131</sup> Paradoxically, this transvaluation entails the redefinition of 'effluvium' into the basis of a 'moral' purity.

However, the 'clean and proper' national 'body' is also threatened from 'without': more recent cultural contamination is identified with the economic and cultural processes of post-modernisation, and the seemingly relentless thrust of world culture into post-modernity. The Researcher's own quest for home both informs and counterpoints Heberley's, as he tries to find his way back to his house through the streets of Wellington after a literary function in the Parliamentary Beehive. However, the Researcher also seeks a sense of national 'home' in the face of a 1980s New Zealand of pervasive commodification of multiple cultural significations:

Like the days you walked through town, everybody was a hunchback, or ... this incredible desolation, bulldozers, brown dust and falling

masonry ... some young woman slapping the backs of her child's legs ... the exhausting artificiality of the consumer process, people standing between you and what you wanted, charging agency fees. . . . it was like his friend John had said, he'd just driven down from Auckland, you look around and suddenly, *English* trees planted on the eroding hillsides, washbrick *haciendas* in bare paddocks Wizard-of-Oz green with superphosphate ... *where am I?* (47-8)

The sense of 'placelessness' which results from the confusion of de-localised cultural signifiers of place, and culminating in the hyperreal, greener-than-green of the paddocks which refers, precisely, to a *fictional* place, also informs the Researcher's railings against McDonald's. He has divined a 'plot' which extends from Hollow Earth -- Symmes Hole -- to the Hollow Mountain of the Big M, and which maps the progressive 'colonisation of inner space':

Capt. John Cleves Symmes, hero of the War of 1812, rejected the laws of Newton ... he almost got to Congress to provide money to place 'Old Glory on those interior planets'. The Renaissance wanted to 'civilise' Caliban ... the Enlightenment wanted to appropriate 'natural innocence' ... and Jeremiah Reynolds wanted to get *inside* -- and his descendants did: nuclear submarines and fast food. It may be that Wilkes and Reynolds had a *metaphorical* understanding.... (154)

Now the McDonald's insignia, the golden M,

when you looked at it was more like a mountain in off-season grime with the snow run off revealing the chucked-aside juice cans and the lost broken wristwatches and the ravines full of bent skipoles abandoned by fat young executives from the Challenge Finance Corporation or by fastfood management trainees whose blood has already turned to tomato-sauce that can't keep them warm even above a frier. (243)

It is the garbage dump of the detritus of multi-national consumer capitalism; it is the abyss of desolation and contamination into which local cultural identity falls, so that the consumer (Researcher) experiences being "behind the plateglass window of some robot dunny that's really, literally, nowhere" (250). It is the strategic (for capital) non-localised 'nowhere' of indistinction, so that it can be, literally, everywhere. Product and service are standardised, and marketed as the total McDonald's 'look', with no chance, no variation. From the utterly standardised, routinised preparation of potatoes for the fries (247), to the milkshake service by 'android assistants', who "didn't even have to think about the dose, the machine cut off automatically without spilling a drop" (245), the 'look' of

McDonald's is paradoxically a 'non-look', or a lack of interaction between the participants in the production and consumption process, indeed between the product(ion) and the assistant. Thus the Researcher concludes that "you could hardly blame the kid for that, for that poor android blank of his face, when he was never to be allowed ever to juggle milk and icecream like a real milkbar artiste" (245).

McDonald's is critiqued, like colonisation, within the terms of a binary opposition between its own 'inauthenticity' and the 'authenticity' of the Popular Milkbar. The Popular Milkbar is 'pure' New Zealand, compared to the 'contamination' represented by McDonald's, a contamination which abjects the subject of post-colonial national identity, denying a place from which that identity may be spoken.<sup>132</sup> McDonald's occupies that place on the borders of the national 'body': it is 'external' in its 'foreignness', or rather, simply in its 'non-New Zealandness' (for it is (the representation of) *nowhere* rather than strictly 'foreign'); but it is also 'here', in Courtenay Place, Wellington, and its patrons are the youth of that place. Indeed, to complicate nostalgic notions of cultural purity, its young Maori patrons are Rastafarians. McDonald's food represents the abject for the Researcher, "sipping the milkshake thickened with plaster-dust and turdy robot peristaltic amoebiasis ooze" (245). His search for 'home' requires that he expel it from the 'national body'. In a gesture of expulsion which has more to do with purification than defilement, the Researcher

rammed the last chunk of hamburger into his mouth, and then ran into the aisle loudly groaning with both hands over his mouth and when he was fairly in the centre of the place, he took his hands away and as he lurched for the door mock-barfed to both sides, and shot out into Courtenay Place hearing a cheer from the Rasta booths that the door cut short.

He ran sniggering towards the bus-shelters; and he was thinking as he reached the other side of the street and made for the public toilet to clean the glup off his chin, that he'd done that very silly thing for the Popular Milkbar and all it stood for. (265-6)

Unlike the 'placelessness' of McDonald's, sealed behind the plateglass windows, the Researcher recalls that as you sat in the Popular Milkbar, "you were always aware of being half in the street -- you had a direct connection with what was happening out there" (244). Unlike the sterile 'look' that was a 'non-look' of McDonald's, the food and coffee of the Popular Milkbar ensured "your senses lit by siege fires" (251), the service was personal, with a "smile, which was for you alone" (244). Unlike the

android anonymity of McDonald's, "you'd seen 'Nick the Greek' (cousin) put the measure of milk in from the cooler and the two scoops of icecream, plunging his dark blackhaired Greek arm down into the icecream tub where you could actually see everything that he was doing. And what's more, he wanted you to" (244). Even the name, the 'Popular Milkbar' makes a claim, within the terms of the Researcher's project, to the authenticity of belonging. Its appeal to the demotic, and to 'the people' as a socio-cultural 'entity', echoes the terms of his privileging, through Heberley as the basis of true New Zealand national belonging, the unofficial beach settlers, who derived from the more humble strata of British society, and who formed in the 'new' land, an integrated community with the *original* people.

At this point it would seem that the novel comprises a post-colonial critique of post-modernity; however, I wish to place post-modern textual features in a pivotal position, in a more complex project of celebration and critique. In this, I acknowledge precisely the mix of adversarial and complicit functions identified by Frow as characteristic of the cultural practices of post-modernism. In itself, the status of any single textual feature as critical of, or complicit with, post-modernity is undecidable. However, while *Symmes Hole* comprises numerous post-modern textual features -- it has a post-modern 'feel' -- it does not give itself up entirely to play, nor even to a 'coherent' reading. My intention is therefore not to produce such a reading; nor do I propose a 'depth' model which argues that the text 'looks' or 'feels' post-modern, but *underneath* is *really* post-colonial. Instead, I wish to highlight certain crucial intersections of the post-colonial and the post-modern.

Linda Hutcheon argues that "Parody is a perfect postmodern form . . . for it parodically incorporates and challenges that which it parodies."<sup>133</sup> The 'shape' of *Symmes Hole* parodies the scholarly historical text: it incorporates an Introduction, putatively written by an historical scholar, and which makes use of the authenticating convention of footnotes. There are acknowledgements at the end of the text which include both historical and 'real' fictional texts, and their publication details. However, there is both a disclaimer, following these acknowledgements, which announces that *Symmes Hole* "is not remotely a work of scholarship, but of fiction" (324), and the declaration by Dr Keehua Roa, author of the Introduction, that he is "certain that Wedde makes no claims that *Symmes*

*Hole* is truth, or fiction" (14). The status of the text is therefore problematised as it enacts "the [post-modern] effacement . . . of some key boundaries or separations between genres and discourses."<sup>134</sup>

Intertextuality is often noted as a post-modern characteristic, pointing to the act of writing as, in the words of Dr Keehua Roa, "redistribution rather than creation" (14). Writing is thus the effect of text on text, as "multiple surfaces" rather than depths,<sup>135</sup> and rather than the product of a controlling subjectivity. Intertextuality acts as the "subvers[ion] of the signature and of authorial originality."<sup>136</sup> *Symmes Hole* manifests an extraordinary range of intertexts: the most obvious, important, and sustained one would be Melville's *Moby Dick*. Others would include allusions to Tennyson (208), Pound (41), and Katherine Mansfield, whose "'little steamer all hung with bright beads'" echoes through the text. A further form of the blurring of boundaries -- between genres (history, fiction), and texts (intertextuality) -- is that of the collapsing of distinction between 'high' and 'low' (popular) culture, and in *Symmes Hole*, 'high' cultural literary allusions are given no priority over references to (from) popular songs (49-50; 70; 114), and the epigraphs range from Eddie Rabbit to Walter Benjamin. These textual manoeuvres may be seen as subversive of modernism's cultural élitism, of its valorisation of creative originality and of the grand narratives; and for modernism's Others, this may spell discursive or cultural 'liberation'. However, the same features problematise the 'subject' of 'liberation' and of contestation to the extent, for example, that these are founded on notions of authenticity and origins; they conform to a "new configuration of the cultural domain . . . a changed relation between culture and economic production. . . . [which has] transformed the relationship of apparent exteriority between the cultural and the economic."<sup>137</sup>

One implication of this is that the subject of 'culture' is simultaneously the subject of an exchange-relation -- of exchangeability -- which is inconvenient for projects of subjective autonomy or integrity. The construction of reading and writing subjectivities is problematic in *Symmes Hole*, undermining modernist-humanist notions of a centred, controlling and transcendent subject. In Craig Owens' formulation, "post-modernists . . . expose the tyranny of the *signifier*, the violence of its law."<sup>138</sup> It would appear, then, that there is an author, Ian Wedde, who has obtained the services of an historian, Dr Keehua Roa, to write an

Introduction for his novel. Dr Keehua Roa's Introduction follows most of the conventions of a separate text: it is separately copyrighted; it refers to Wedde in the third person, and to its author's having met Wedde at a "whaling and whale conservation" conference whose place and time are specified as Canada, four years prior to writing (13), thereby suggesting the verifiability of these statements; and it refers to its own status as an enthusiast's introduction, a gesture not conventionally carried out by the author of a text. The tone of the Introduction is one of scholarly speculation, and it suggests a reading of the novel, again not something that writers generally provide with their texts. However, there are other indications that the Introduction cannot be separated from the fiction which follows. The pagination of the Introduction is not separate from the novel, and Dr Keehua Roa refers suggestively to its "long (almost shared) gestation" (13). More importantly, the name 'Dr Keehua Roa' translates as Dr Long Ghost, the name of the character described as the 'genius' of the novel (12), and whose controlling spirit is suggested in the section title, "Ghost Writing." Dr Keehua Roa, as a relatively conventional historian, suggests the mirror image of Doctor Long Ghost, the historical subversive who, "At Goethe's death-bed cry of 'More Light!' . . . carries in a smoky, hectic, and confusing lamp" (12). However, Doctor Long Ghost, although an impressive figure of education and talent (37), is not what he seems: for a start, it is pointed out that he was not a real doctor, but merely "the steward, which is good enough to give him control of the medical supplies" (150). The reference to Doctor Long Ghost's medical supplies invokes the character of the Researcher whose historical hallucinations are drug-induced, a point which will be expanded shortly. If the mirror image holds, then the stability of Dr Keehua Roa's identity is also in doubt. Finally, Doctor Long Ghost's declaration that "It's time to write the new *Georgicon*" (37) recalls the name of another of Wedde's texts, a volume of poetry published in 1984, and in which a number of motifs important in *Symmes Hole* also appear.<sup>139</sup>

Post-modern 'historylessness' is perhaps the feature most clearly on the border between post-modernism and post-colonialism. Jameson discusses "the transformation of reality into images, the fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents,"<sup>140</sup> and this is a moment of post-modernity exemplified in the Moa Point sewer outfall (18). However, the distinctions of past and present collapse further for the Researcher, who becomes so disoriented by the whaling past into which he has submerged

himself that he 'becomes' Herman Melville. He reflects that "Two years after discharging from the *United States* Herman's married and the famous author of two books. Debate rages on both sides of the Atlantic over whether he's a bullshit artist" (186). Similarly, on his way 'home', and constructing his 'story', the Researcher wonders whether his antics will be 'read' by passers-by as those of "'Some young pisshead ... dope fiend ... dole bludger ... sex pervert ... subser' subversive ... ' -- how did they know he wasn't a, Courtenay Place bus-shelter sherry bood-head? ... executive for the Challenge Finance Corporation? ... MacDonald's Fast Foods franchisee?" (70).

Subject to "the eternal present of history" (108), the Researcher is enmeshed in the circulations of 'historical' engulfment and projection. Further into his journey 'home', he overhears two drug-runners: "'What was that?' from the parade, as the boat bottomed. 'Sounded like ...'/'Go for it Galky, cops've ...!'" (76). He watches "the slightly Asiatic eyes of the man called, was it Galky? ...Galkin? *What?* ... saw the flat eyes look through the darkness and *see* him at the same moment as the name *Gálkin* clanged into place in his cowering head" (77). An historical connection is made as he remembers that "*that's the name of the doctor on the sloop Vostók which came to Queen Charlotte Sound with the Bellingshausen-lazarev Antarctic Expedition in 1820, he's a, a dead Russian?*" (77). This identification is 'realised' as the Researcher, abjected by this loss of historical-temporal perspective (75-7), becomes involved in the drug-runners' activities. Much later, the status of the histories he produces is questioned by the discovery that he has "stuck a leviathan track of Galkin's 'frozen trevalli-bait' up his nose . . . waiting for history to come to him" (242).

Thus the particular force of the problematisation of the 'pastness of the past' is found in the Researcher's *implication* in his histories. His attempts to recall and recount the past are constantly interrupted by the materiality of his present. His narrative includes commentary on his own physical comfort or discomfort at the moment of narration. At one such point, he reflects that "He was enjoying himself now. This was easy. It was familiar -- it was real!" (149), while soon after, "He paid no attention to the sounds that came up to him from below. But when the washing-machine began to grind away he felt his mind flinch" (151). More generally, *Symmes Hole* suggests the implication of the late twentieth-

century post-colonial present in the construction of the past. Located in the New Zealand of the 1980s, the novel explores constructions of the past which address *present* anxieties to naturalise New Zealand beginnings and to reconstitute an authentic guilt-free basis of belonging, founded on the 'natural' terms of a shared occupancy. However, the problematisation of this project, which constitutes *post-colonisation*, is predicated on the problematisation of the very possibility of the recovery of 'innocence', and demonstrates similarly the impossibility of the 'high ground' of *unimplicated* subjectivity in the production of historical accounts. This is hilariously dramatised when the Researcher, who has been hiding in the ceiling of his house (in history), announces to his family, unaware of his presence and eating dinner in the room below, "Now Hear This. . . This is God!", at which the ceiling gives way and he falls through, "slap-bang into the family dinner" (189). This represents the collapse of the narrative, historical 'God's-eye-view'.

The post-modern textual features may therefore be employed in a critique of post-colonisation. One of the moments of the post-colonising project problematised in *Symmes Hole* is nostalgia. The Researcher's nostalgia for a 'home' in New Zealand prompts his 'search' for Heberley, whose own basis of belonging may be linked to nostalgic desires (for 'home'). Recognising that for him, there is no possible return to England, Heberley's experience of unfamiliar places is mediated by memories of England, and invocations of his mother: "Above, now that there was no flicker of fire-light to blind him, the stars blazed in a clear sky ... at its height it was almost the colour of ripe mulberries, Dorset mulberries, Weymouth mulberries. *Mother* ... his lips met on the beginning of the word, preparing a kiss" (27). Even following his mother's death, his new life is the product of nostalgia: he is drawn ashore by the 'familiar' smell of what he believes to be pigeon pie, but which turns out to be the native weka. Thus Heberley's 'home' is founded on a misrecognition, pointing to the fact that nostalgia always speaks an *irrecoverable* separation from its source; to regain its 'object' can never be to regain original plenitude. As if to illustrate this, 'Heberley' is left, by the Researcher, on a boat at sea, dreaming of the satisfaction of the 'natural' appetites and the domestic 'ideal' of sharing a meal with his family:

And then he remembered he'd been on deck and hadn't eaten -- he was famished. He thought, Wonder what they're eating at home? ... fish and potato and some greens, I'll be bound! ... my good God,



wouldn't I just like to be having some! ... wouldn't I like to be with the whole mob, right now, this minute, *there* ... fish and spud and turnip-top, my God! (235)

Further, Heberley's quest for home is the product of the Researcher's own nostalgic quest. The Researcher is nostalgic for Heberley as representative of the *idea* of home, and as he attempts to narrativise Heberley into coherent *presence*, reflects: "But it's got you, this yarn that's as much like a search as it's like a memory.... But *if* it's got you, this staggering yarn that's as much quest as knowledge, then you don't stop just because there's no one ... no one but you, listening...." (25). Indeed, numerous parallels may be found between the quests of Heberley and the Researcher, pointing to the implication of the (desires of the) latter in the construction of the former. The domestic base he eventually finds after an arduous journey through the night is imbued with the affect of 'landfall', as the terms of his (unsteady) arrival echo those of the beaching of ex-whalers like Heberley, and the sojourn of Melville with the exotic Marquesan, Fayaway: "'God, you, you look so lovely!' -- falling toward her dark tumble of hair . . . and the fading fragrance of cocobutter night-cream, that coconut .... As his full weight landed on her shoulder she stumbled back against the sink and put her arms around him to steady him, and he stood, leaning heavily on her" (120). Later, though, even he is found, separated from his family, and longing to join them for "tarakihi, and sure enough! -- mashed spud! And ... greens, broccoli with some cheese" (189).

The Researcher's nostalgic construction of Heberley is problematised as the basis for a coherent history of national belonging, and the source of 'authentic', culturally integrated, demotic New Zealand identity, in the actual *incoherence* of Heberley's subjectivity. The Researcher attempts to discover, buried beneath the official historical accounts (the 'success story' of colonisation), another history whose bringing to the surface will heal national-subjective discontinuities. However, Heberley's historical 'failure' is enacted (or in another sense pre-figured) in his failed attempts to produce his discourse, or recount his story. He has difficulty holding his story together in his own head, attempts evoking an almost physical struggle with its elements:

'I was two years cabin boy on the, *Sarah Margaret*? ... captain's name was Sheether belonging to Scarborough in the Hamburg trade in 1822.' He paused, panting ... right so far ... he steadied the pieces in his mind, picking them up one and then the next ... like swinging the

lead through a reef. 'That November there was a heavy gale in the south-west, we sailed to London and I left the ship, what?', as the pieces tumble ... 'Wait, then?' I ... I took lodgings in St Anne Street then I went on a cruise until my money ran out, then I went salvage diving then I went to the West Indies, then ... ', but he's lost it again. (29)

He evokes the precise opposite of subjective mastery in his stumbling, faltering, and self-questioning, and thus fails to retain an audience: "If he was a great storyteller there might be an audience. But he has this questioning inflection; it's as though he's always asking himself, What happened? Is this how it was? Was I there then? Do I remember? What does it mean?" (22). As a result, his brief successes in narrating to someone else are always soon interrupted, leaving him helplessly in mid-sentence: "Anyway, I wasn't letting them out of my ... hang on, what's ...?"/'Goin' 'shore.' The bottle hits the water. 'My God. You the worst storyteller I ever heard, boy'" (25). His own submersion in the process of trying to articulate his meanings often draws him down into silence in mid-word: "what about down there, the Southern Pacif' ...?" (36). However, it is less Heberley's individual failure to articulate that is evoked than the failure of narrative conventions to account for the many-layered, multiply significant, and subversive (of Old World historical certainties) experiences and realities. As Heberley is asked, "Man, where the hell have *you* been, I'd like to know ...?", he can only attempt to respond, despairing, "Nowhere, I mean, I ...", meaning, How can I even begin to tell the story of it?" (69).

Indeed, Heberley's incoherent 'narrative' and the post-modern textual features of the novel subvert the whole notion of 'plot', a notion central to the Researcher's post-colonising project. He has conceived of systematic colonisation in terms of the coherence of a narrative plot, with all its claims to mastery, and to the suppression of *other* narratives, and incoherent 'events'. Now, lost in history and his own paranoid subjectivity, he divines, as I have pointed out, an historical 'plot' which links whaling credit economics, "shadowy millionaire and crank" (153) Jeremiah Reynolds' backing of the Great Expedition whose hidden agenda was the opportunity to search for Symmes Hole, the passage to the centre of the earth and whose space was believed by John Cleves Symmes to be habitable, and the colonisation of 'inner space' by Ray Kroc's McDonald's Fast Foods Empire. For the Researcher, this history represents the 'plot' of

'neo-colonisation'. Both 'colonisation' and neo-colonisation' constitute narratives which have enabled him to project Otherness as external (British, middle-class, American, McDonald's), to the authentic New Zealand (demotic, naturally Maori-identified) identity it suppresses, and which he seeks to rediscover and to produce as a counter-history. However, his own search for national innocence is the product of paranoia, the same attempt to create a narrative coherence -- a plot -- from the high ground of moral unimpeachability. The paradox is that what he attempts is precisely the elision of the very ruptures and discontinuities from which post-colonial discourses emerge; whose earlier elision in the interests of a hegemonic nationalism founded on the colonial past effected the suppression of Nation's (and colonisation's) Others, and which now trouble its authority. Post-colonisation, in this guise, is the call to 'forget again'.

The Researcher attempts to reconnect the present to origins in terms of the narrative continuity of plots, their deliberateness and design, but it is a project that taxes, even exhausts its materials. His narratives are full of disruptive qualifiers and changes of direction: "History -- no, cancel that . . . /Fate is preparing one of those conjunctions which with the advantage of hindsight we can say looks . . . inevitable" (151). He can discover no *natural* ordering or narrativisation of events, as he flounders among his 'facts': "Captain Ahab . . . . a wilful, brilliant seaman who would happily sail his entire complement of mortal crew down Symmes Hole -- but more of that soon./No, now" (153). Both the return to the past and the narrativisation of the past in terms of organised and linear, progressive history are, despite his own best efforts, undermined by the contingencies of the present and the fallibility of the subject. The Researcher's fallibility is dramatised in the status of his histories as the product of drug-induced paranoid hallucinations, so that the unreliability of the producer destabilises the account itself.

The critique of post-modernity in *Symmes Hole* entails that moment of post-modernisation which reduces history to a commodity whose production is tied to market forces and patterns of consumption. It is dressed up, for example, in media entertainment gimmicks such as the 'Today in History' slot on breakfast radio (141-52); indeed, the Researcher contemplates history as a *slotgame* (rather than the comparative

reassurance of a 'plot') in which agency and accountability are surrendered to the machinations of what Wilson termed "dark implacable forces:"

and the rules of the game are, you can't choose whom to blow away into the eternal present of history, you can only choose which side to take, in the 'historically verifiable' question of who fired the first shot across the stream and in which direction -- only the machine has a way of jamming and returning your coin, and the logic of *its* choices remains impenetrable: . . . an epistemology based on the *unknown* rather than the known.... (108)

The Researcher's nostalgia for 'pure' history is symbolised by his 'pursuit' of the legendary White Whale, pure precisely because it was *a-historical*, and its domain was the a-historical sea. However, when a whale appears in the bay in his *present*, he cannot simply *see* it. It is caught up in the links between the entertainment and the fast-food industries, as "A couple of alert take-away food wagons had arrived on the scene, and a drink and snofreeze van ... the cheerful crowd munched burgers and ate ice-cream" (112). What he discovers, though, is that there never was a time when a whale was just a whale. He has investigated the past when the whale was the commodity sought in large-scale hunting and trade relations between nations and peoples; now, as he watched the whale in the bay, "He was thinking how no more than maybe twenty years ago . . . the harbour would have quickly filled with boats bent on sporting massacre. And now the crowd had a proprietary air ... a man in a wetsuit swam out like an emissary toward the whale and her calf" (112-3). Thus the discourse of conservation produces just another historical construction of the whale, another *claim* to the whale. The Researcher's wife is uncomprehending of his lack of immediate response, his recourse instead to whaling dates and facts and the *historical* significance (113). But as he reflects to himself, "What you wanted was your dream of the whale living without time, what you got was a glimpse of a survivor, and then the 'wasted time' of not even being sure any more whether you could see it or not -- it wasn't just as simple as she thought..." (115).

His own attachment to the symbol of the White Whale is no less a discursive mediation, and represents no less of a commodification of history than the entertainment-value effected by post-modernisation's conflation of the aesthetic and the economic. In his post-colonising attempt to construct a counter-history which appeals to the purity of the White Whale, the Researcher attempts to *purchase* authenticity and

belonging. This is not to argue that there is 'pure' history, outside of this process, but that the post-colonial project should not be a search for the 'truth' of pure origins -- these are always already lost -- but the critical calculation and analysis of 'market forces' and 'costs' driving discourses and political engagement. It is in this spirit that *Symmes Hole* posits the strategic value of 'failed histories', arguing that the process of narrativisation falsifies history in attributing to it coherence and closure. The Researcher acknowledges that his search has raised rather than answered questions, re-opened episodes rather than closed them. Just as Mocha Dick successfully terrorised whalers in revenge for their killings, by failing to conform to any predictable pattern or plan, confounding the chances of "authenticated sightings" (165), the Researcher inherits Doctor Long Ghost's advice to Melville. Having come to the realisation that "he has to go back, he has to construct and plant the slow bomb that will fumigate the quarantine hulk of his nation's consciousness" (161), Melville is told by Doctor Long Ghost that "what you have to be, is an anarchist to whom this authority is meaningless. . . . you have to be unafraid and therefore without respect . . . incorrupt and therefore a *failure*" (181). It is after this that Melville declares his "earnest desire to write those sorts of books which are said to 'fail'" (187). This is arguably the strongest debt that *Symmes Hole* owes to the Melville connection.

A counter-history which is constructed to appear in its positivity is argued, in *Symmes Hole*, to be ultimately less troubling to the official version than one which is allowed to remain threateningly beneath the surface of the nation's consciousness. Therefore, the 'failure' of the Researcher's history, suggested in the unreliability of his subjectivity and the inconclusiveness of his 'findings' serves, not to refuse it the status of a counter-truth, and instead to make a series of suggestions and connections which disrupt the integrity of official history.

The novel is critical of both neo-imperialising post-modernity, and of the Researcher's paranoid response of trying to re-discover and preserve the integrity of a post-colonial (national) self by projecting Otherness outside as an external force or threat. In this way, it addresses issues of post-modernity in the face of post-colonial anxieties, but through post-modern narrative strategies exposes the otherness within post-colonialism rather than external to it. A productive engagement with the questions of any reified position is achieved through the negotiation of the insights of

both post-colonialism and post-modernism. Doctor Dieffenbach's reflection on Worser's mistrust of Colonel Wakefield with his 'new people' rhetoric suggests a critical analogy for post-colonialism and post-modernism:

He is right, our mistrust of Colonel Wakefield is parenthetical -- mine intellectual, Worser's animal: mine makes me sad, Worser's makes him angry. My sadness can see into the future, and his anger will show him the present moment to attack ... without my sadness, his anger will spring at a decoy and waste itself ... without his anger, my sadness will vindicate itself uselessly in some European university. *We need each other.* . . . we must have an understanding, Worser and I. If we do not, we will end by contributing equally to the evil that is already here.... (208)

Therefore, rather than questions of the identity of the text, it is more useful to examine the questions post-modernism raises in post-colonial space for the subject, desire and resistance. The critique of humanist discourses of identity, including post-colonial ones, signalled in the discovery of the empty origin, and the instability of the subject's place in discourse (or culture) nevertheless may acknowledge their provisional necessity. The point is to retain the problematising moment to prevent such discourses from erecting themselves into monolithic structures which repress difference. Post-colonialism comprises variant and contradictory moments which attest to the location of Otherness not simply as external to the innocent, autonomous self, but *within*.

In this third Section of the thesis, I have developed the preceding discussion of post-colonial discourses into a consideration of subjective and discursive problematics, informed by an understanding of post-colonialism as a condition of (subjective) instability resulting from the re-introduction of what the dominant (National) discourse excludes. In Chapter Six, I posited, through a reading of the 'hybridity' of subjects in an encounter with difference, an analogy between the productions of sexual and colonial difference, and in Chapter Seven I employed the theory of abjection to suggest a reading of the non-autonomy and non-integrity of settler post-colonial subjectivities. Therefore, the third Section so far comprises an argument for understanding difference and otherness as constitutive of the post-colonial self, and for cultural and political agency which relinquishes its privileging of (imperial-connoted) purity and sameness. Rather than a conclusion, I offer as a final chapter to this

Section, and to the thesis, a 'textual and cultural 'case-study' in the discourses and problematics which have informed the preceding discussions. In Chapter Eight I present a reading of Witi Ihimaera's *The Matriarch*.

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Notes.

- 1 Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation," in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 305.
- 2 For example, John Sinclair argues that "In Australia we are quite accustomed to recognizing that Britain, the United States and Japan are centres which exert their historically and structurally overdetermined influence upon us," but he points to the principles of "culture as a form of resistance," and of 'cultural discount' in the flows of cultural products which suggest that "The more alien the material, the higher the 'cultural discount' and the weaker the preference: thus Australia might be receptive to Japanese capital and consumer goods, but not to Japanese television programmes." See his "Television in the Postcolonial World," *Arena*, 96 (1991), pp. 129, 130.
- 3 Bhabha, "DissemiNation," pp. 312-3.
- 4 The term '*frisson*' seems particularly apt in its inclusion of the senses of 'shudder' and 'thrill', an ambivalence which characterises abjection.
- 5 John Frow, "What Was Post-Modernism?" in Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin (eds), *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 139.
- 6 Stephen Slemon, "The Scramble for Post-colonialism," Paper presented at De-Scribing Empire Conference, Brisbane 1991. In press.
- 7 Frow, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 141.
- 8 For example, in "Modernism's Last Post," in Adam and Tiffin (eds), Stephen Slemon has noted that we may recognize "a specifically anti- or *post-colonial discursive* purchase in culture, one which begins in the moment that colonial power inscribes itself onto the body and space of its Others" (p. 3). An earlier version of this essay was published in *Ariel*, 20, No. 4 (1989).
- 9 Bhabha, "DissemiNation," p. 310.
- 10 Bhabha, "DissemiNation," p. 310, 311.
- 11 Frow, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 142.
- 12 Bhabha, "DissemiNation," p. 313.
- 13 See Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991), p. ix.
- 14 Bhabha, "DissemiNation," p. 310.
- 15 John Frow, *What Was Postmodernism?* (Sydney: Local Consumption Publications, 1991), p. 37.
- 16 In "The White Inuit Speaks: Contamination as Literary Strategy," Diana Brydon refers to the "recurrent post-colonial metaphor of the colony as the empire's garbage dump" in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 200. In a Marxist consideration of settler colonialism, Rob Steven argues the importance of "the relative surplus population which a combination of crises had created in Britain; . . . [and] that the only half-coherent strategy for dealing with a potentially revolutionary situation was somehow to get rid of the surplus population,



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which was poor, unemployed, and susceptible to who knows what political agitation," in "Land and White Settler Colonialism: The Case of Aotearoa," in David Novitz and Bill Willmott (eds), *Culture and Identity in New Zealand* (Wellington: GP Books, 1989), p. 22. In "Ellen Silk and Her Sisters: Female Emigration to the New World," Charlotte Macdonald discusses perceptions of a 'sexual imbalance' in the British population which saw an 'excess' of women there, while an 'insufficiency of women' was perceived in the colonies. The colonies were thus seen as the natural repository for Britain's 'excess' women. See Macdonald, in *Men's Power, Women's Resistance: The Sexual Dynamics of History* (London Feminist History Group: Pluto Press, 1983).

17 Later in the chapter I discuss post-colonialism as the belated replaying of these movements. This formulation will be represented graphically and accompanied by explanatory commentary.

18 Kay Schaffer, *Women and the Bush: Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 1.

19 Schaffer, p. 22, 31.

20 Schaffer, p. 52.

21 Schaffer, p. 95.

22 Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male - A History* (Auckland: Penguin, 1987), p. 5.

23 Schaffer, p. xii. In this suggestive statement, Schaffer looks forward to her argument that it is not simply the land which is inscribed, but femininity itself, in such discursive constructions (58). Woman can only be 'metaphorical' in phallocentrism.

24 Schaffer, p. 58.

25 Brydon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 198.

26 Schaffer, p. 30-1.

27 Schaffer, p. 81.

28 John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* (London, 1689), Section 35 in Peter Laslett (ed.) *John Locke: Two Treatises on Government*, 310; cited in Schaffer, p. 82.

29 Schaffer, p. 95; citing James Collier, *The Pastoral Age in Australia*, pp. 129-30.

30 Schaffer, p. 95.

31 Brydon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 191.

32 Hodge and Mishra, p. 51.

33 Ken Gelder, "Coronation Hill: Contesting the Sacred," *Arena*, 96 (1991), p. 17.

34 Brydon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 196.

35 Schaffer, p. 110.

36 Brydon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 196.

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- 37 Brydon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 195.
- 38 Stan Anson, "The Postcolonial Fiction," *Arena*, 96 (1991), p. 66.
- 39 Fiona Kennedy, *The Weekend Australian*, October 5-6, 1991, p. 11.
- 40 Audrey Thomas, *Mrs Blood* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1970).
- 41 Audrey Thomas, *Songs My Mother Taught Me* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1973). Hereafter referred to as *Songs*.
- 42 Audrey Thomas, *Blown Figures* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1974).
- 43 Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989), p. 76.
- 44 Grosz, p. 68.
- 45 Grosz, p. 80.
- 46 Grosz, p. 80.
- 47 Grosz, p. 79.
- 48 Grosz, p. 72.
- 49 Grosz, p. 80.
- 50 Grosz, p. 72; my emphasis.
- 51 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay in Abjection* (trans.) Leon S. Roudiez, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 17.
- 52 Grosz, p. 77.
- 53 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 13.
- 54 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 17.
- 55 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 7.
- 56 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 109.
- 57 Grosz, p. 79-80.
- 58 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 72.
- 59 The figure of the outlaw as dangerous excess occurs in *Songs*, where the family have heard of "Floyd Masters, the ever-wanted outlaw with maroon eyes", or believe they hear "a murderer, fleeing from Ontario – hungry, desperate, a man who would stop at nothing" (89). Significantly, the murderer is from the 'beyond' of Canada, the *feminine* Other of the United States, where Isobel's family lives.
- 60 Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (trans.) Gillian C. Gill, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 109.

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- 61 Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," *Signs*, 7 (1981), p. 28.
- 62 See Kristeva, "Women's Time," p. 31.
- 63 Paul Smith, *Discerning the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 95-6. Throughout this discussion, my use of the term 'paranoia' serves to suggest certain privileged socially produced subjective and discursive structures and patterns. It is not intended to refer to clinical diagnosis of individuals as subjects (of particular discourses).
- 64 Smith, p. 96.
- 65 See Hodge and Mishra, p. 51.
- 66 Smith, p. 96.
- 67 See Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October*, 28 (1984), for discussion of this idea.
- 68 Smith, p. 96.
- 69 Bill Willmott, "Introduction: Culture and National Identity," in David Novitz and Bill Willmott (eds), p. ix.
- 70 Smith, p. 87. Smith states that "what is crucial to the paranoiac is the dual ability to objectify or realize a reality and yet to proclaim the 'subject's' innocence of its formation", p. 87. In using the term 'paranoid', I do not argue that there are no external threats to post-colonial national-cultural sovereignty. Paranoia does not imply that the external world does not exist, but rather that its threat is projected by the subject. This actually reduces to the banality that what is bad for the self is produced out of a prior conception of what is good for the self. It is this 'good' which the subject believes to be its own that I question.
- 71 Laura Mulvey, "Magnificent Obsession," in *Parachute*, 42 (1986), p. 10.
- 72 Novitz and Willmott (eds), p. 19.
- 73 Simon During, "Postmodernism or Postcolonialism?" *Landfall*, 39, No. 3 (1985), pp. 368-9. In the following discussion of post-colonialism and post-modernism, I am not at all concerned with explicating or indeed reconciling the various understandings of post-modernism itself, but rather with the *terms* of the debate, principally from the post-colonial perspective, and solely in terms of its implications for self-representation in and of post-colonialism. For example, although it is a very important issue, it is outside the terms of my current argument to engage with the debate over whether post-modernism does represent cultural neo-imperialism. For analyses which dispute this, see for example, Frow in Adam and Tiffin (eds); Sinclair, in *Arena*, 96.
- 74 Slemon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 1-2.
- 75 Helen Tiffin, "Post-Colonialism, Post-Modernism and the Rehabilitation of Post-Colonial History," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 23, No. 1 (1988), p. 170.
- 76 Slemon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 1.
- 77 Arun P. Mukherjee, "Whose Post-Colonialism and Whose Postmodernism?" *World Literature Written in English*, 30, No. 2 (1990), p. 3.
- 78 Mukherjee, p. 4.

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79 Smith, p. 97.

80 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 4.

81 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 5.

82 Linda Hutcheon, "Circling the Downspout of Empire," in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 170. An earlier version of this essay was published as "Circling the Downspout of Empire: Post-Colonialism and Postmodernism," *Ariel*, 20, No. 4 (1989).

83 Hutcheon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 179.

84 Slemon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 2. In the earlier version, Slemon refers to the "contested terrain" of textual interpretation (p. 4; my emphasis), suggesting even more clearly the presence of tensions between post-colonialism and post-modernism. Arun Mukherjee also refers to the "contested terrain" between them (p. 1).

85 During, "Postmodernism or Postcolonialism?" p. 372.

86 Tiffin, p. 170.

87 Tiffin, p. 170-1.

88 Tiffin, p. 171.

89 Novitz and Willmott (eds), p. 19.

90 Jane Gallop, *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 56.

91 Mukherjee, p. 1.

92 Mukherjee, p. 4.

93 Slemon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 5.

94 Slemon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 9.

95 Mukherjee, p. 3.

96 Mukherjee, p. 4.

97 Slemon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 3.

98 During, p. 369.

99 Mukherjee, p. 1. This is not to agree with Mukherjee's point. She argues it in relation to post-colonialists' attempts to "create a post-colonial theory that can be applied to 'all' . . . post-colonial writing, regardless of the differences of gender, race, class, caste, ethnicity, and sexual orientation" (p. 2). However, this is founded on a misreading of statements, for example, in Ashcroft et. al. that "We use the term 'post-colonial' . . . to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day", and that "the literatures of African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries, and Sri Lanka are all post-colonial literatures. The literature of the U.S.A.

U.S.A. should also be placed in this category" (Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* [London: Routledge, 1989], p. 2). Such statements address the relevance and efficacy of the term 'post-colonial', and do not in any way imply the development of a single, totalising theory to cover all situations, eliding specificities. Nevertheless, the importance of Mukherjee's argument here is in its positing of a strategic parallel between pos-modernism and post-colonialism which problematises their (more commonly expressed) 'oppositional' relation.

100 Mukherjee, p. 2. On the other hand, Brydon has argued that "discussions of Canadian post-colonialism do not usually equate the settler with the native experience", in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 194.

101 Mukherjee, p. 6.

102 See for example, Hutcheon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 172; Mukherjee, p. 2.

103 During, p. 374.

104 Tiffin, p. 173.

105 Hutcheon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 151.

106 Tiffin, p. 171.

107 Gallop, *The Daughter's Seduction*, p. 62.

108 Gallop, *The Daughter's Seduction*, p. ix.

109 Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p. 4.

110 Ian Wedde, *Symmes Hole* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1986).

111 Mark Williams, *Leaving the Highway: Six Contemporary New Zealand Novelists* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1990), p. 161.

112 See Williams, 161-2.

113 In "SLIP PAGE: Angela Carter, In/Out/In the Postmodern Nexus", Robert Wilson argues that post-modernism unpacks into "two archives", and in relation to this "aesthetic genre" one, that "The sense that post-modernism involves play, or is perhaps essentially play, seems widespread [among writers within this archive] as a positive, even laudatory judgement upon style and mannerisms" (in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p.113; an earlier version was published in *Ariel* 20, No. 4 [1989]). Ihab Hassan may be considered typical of the celebratory response, describing post-modernism as "'playful, paratactical and deconstructionist ... it recalls the spirit of the avant-garde, and so carries sometimes the label of neo-avant garde'" (Ihab Hassan, *The Postmodern Turn: Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture* [Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987]; cited in Wilson, p. 113).

114 Wilson points, for example, to Fredric Jameson's noting of post-modern "depthlessness" and its pervasive "waning of affect" (Wilson, p. 112). For such writers, Wilson argues, "There is too much fragmentation, too much bitterness, all wan and inauthentic, and dark, implacable forces make things tick". Indeed, Jameson has characterised post-modernism in terms of a socio-cultural 'pathology', that of schizophrenia:

schizophrenic experience is an experience of isolated, disconnected, discontinuous material signifiers which fail to link up into a coherence sequence. The schizophrenic

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thus does not know personal identity in our sense, since our feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the 'I' and 'me' over time.

On the other hand, the schizophrenic will clearly have a far more intense experience of any given present of the world than we do, since our own present is always part of some larger set of projects which force us selectively to focus our perceptions (Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism in Consumer Society", in Hal Foster (ed), *Postmodern Culture* [London and Sydney: Pluto Press, 1983], p. 119).

115 Wilson, p. 111.

116 Wilson cites Jameson's observation that "aesthetic production today has become integrated into commodity production generally" (113), and Terry Eagleton's prediction that post-modern culture will "dissolve its own boundaries and become coextensive with ordinary commodified life itself, whose ceaseless exchanges and mutations in any case recognize no formal frontiers that are not constantly transgressed" (Terry Eagleton, *Against the Grain: Essays 1975-1985* [London: Verso, 1986], p. 141; cited in Wilson, p. 112).

117 Wilson, p. 112. Jean-François Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard may be seen to typify this position. Wilson refers to "the bizarre playfield of the NOW that Jean Baudrillard has discovered: a discursive space wholly filled, jam-packed indeed, with images, simulations, displacements of 'reality'. . . . A 'precession of simulacra' maps and, in so doing, engenders the territory of the present" (Jean Baudrillard, "The Year 2000 Will Not Take Place," *Futur\*Fall: Excursions into Postmodernity*, p. 27; cited in Wilson, p. 113).

118 Baudrillard's 'subject' as 'screen' entails that "the Faustian, Promethean (perhaps Oedipal) period of production and consumption gives way to the 'proteinic' era of networks, to the narcissistic ad protean era of connectins, contact, contiguity, feedback and generalized interface that goes with the universe of communication. With the television image -- the television being the ultimate and perfect object for this new era -- our own body and the whole surrounding universe become a control screen" (Baudrillard, in Foster (ed), p. 127).

119 Wilson, p. 115.

120 See Simon During, "Postmodernism or Postcolonialism Today," *Textual Practice*, 1, No. 1 (1987), pp. 32-3.

121 John Frow argues the error in this organisation of the concept of the post-modern, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 139.

122 Frow, p. 139.

123 Frow, p. 140.

124 See Frow, p. 140; 146-9.

125 Frow, p. 148.

126 Frow, p. 149.

127 Frow, p. 149; my emphasis.

128 Helen Tiffin, "Post-Colonialism, Post-modernism and the Rehabilitation of Post-Colonial History," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 23, No. 1 (1988), p. 171.

129 Simon During, "Postmodernism or Postcolonialism?" *Landfall* 39, No. 1 (1985), p. 369.

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130 Note that this 'commodity-market' metaphor evokes the model of the *colony*, which has *resources* desired by the colonisers, and which is forced to bring these to the market-place of the colonisers who have the purchasing power. This purchasing power in turn implicates the colony in the colonisers' exchange economy, and provides both the means to, and the *necessity* of, sustained participation.

131 Brydon, in Adam and Tiffin (eds), p. 200.

132 Of course, the 'milkbar' is *not* pure New Zealand: it is a British cultural import, but accepted as part of New Zealand's national-cultural self because it is a privileged *heimlich* other, as opposed to the *unheimlich* American other, McDonald's.

133 Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), p. 11

134 Jameson, in Foster (ed), p. 112.

135 Leonard Wilcox, "Postmodernism or Anti-modernism?", *Landfall* 39, No. 3 (1985), p. 345.

136 Frow, p. 145.

137 Frow, pp. 146-7.

138 Craig Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminism and Postmodernism," in Foster (ed), p. 59.

139 Ian Wedde, *Georgicon* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1984).

140 Jameson, in Foster (ed), p. 125.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### IN SEARCH OF *THE MATRIARCH*: A CASE STUDY.

This thesis analyses settler post-colonialism as a complex of problematics, relating in very broad terms to knowledge, culture and identity, which cannot be understood simply and unidirectionally as 'decolonisation'. The reference of these problematics is inter-disciplinary, pointing to post-colonialism as a rubric which problematises disciplines, or categories of knowledge. I have posited post-colonial study as properly 'cultural studies', its field being 'discourse' in the broad sense of a "complex of signs and practices which organises social existence and social reproduction."<sup>1</sup> This understanding has implications for the reading of literary texts under the rubric of post-colonialism. Stephen Slemon has argued that "Post-colonial literary writing . . . can be read not only as literature, but also as a form of cultural criticism and cultural critique."<sup>2</sup> Further, though, it is an understanding which places literary texts alongside those of textual commentary and criticism, cultural commentary and journalism, autobiography, historical, theoretical and other non-fictional texts, in a practice of discourse analysis which both lends itself to the description of 'case-study', and questions the objectivity of disciplinary demarcations. Indeed, critiques of colonial discourse have identified in the imperialist project the complicity of the epistemological basis of the Age of Enlightenment and its forms of the wills to truth and knowledge. Post-colonial (re)readings either implicitly problematise or actively address those processes of the ordering of knowledge and the constitution of the Other.

In this chapter, the discussion of Witi Ihimaera's *The Matriarch*<sup>3</sup> is intended as such a 'case study', invoking the inter-disciplinarity and inter-textuality of the term -- the many discourses and texts within the novel, as well as the discourses of reviewers, critics, and other commentators. The text is presented as a paradigmatic instance of themes and problematics which have figured in the thesis, and is consistent with the spirit of Simon During's statement that post-colonialism is a "problematizing" rubric for the reading of texts.<sup>4</sup> The emphasis in this chapter is on reading practice, contextuality, and problems of reading position, matters which emerged, for example, in relation to *Symmes Hole*, in contestation of the notion of the identity of the text. In short, I argue that the subject of post-colonial



culture is a *reading* subject, for post-colonial cultural production and communication, whether literary or of other forms, are predicated upon prior readings, as Tiffin notes: "Texts constructed those worlds, 'reading' their alterity assimilatively in terms of their own cognitive codes."<sup>5</sup>

*The Matriarch* is both constituted by, and problematises readings, and thus I do not (indeed, I believe, cannot) offer a coherent reading of the text. Nevertheless, my discussion must be grounded in some enabling premises, a 'proto-reading' which is acknowledged as provisional, incomplete, and symptomatically contradictory (where I demonstrate that I cannot read the text without becoming a reader, without adopting unifying subject-positions). *The Matriarch* comprises Tamatea Mahana's "imaginative reconstruction" (1) of his grandmother Artemis (the Matriarch), and the early relationship between them, in order to discover the significance of her life and her teachings for the meaning and purpose of his own life as heir to her mana and her mission. However, within this teleological quest narrative, sections which focus on family and genealogy, cosmology, mythology and history, and land and identity, are all significant in themselves, suggesting that the process or journey is the point of his narrative, and that Artemis is less the 'destination' than the 'vehicle'. The non-linearity of the text, comprising its non-chronological narrative structure, fragmented episodes, repetitions and rewritings, and plot and character 'inconclusions', points to the activity of reading as a process. It invokes Tiffin's statement that "Decolonization is process, not arrival,"<sup>6</sup> and suggests therefore that 'it' is to be discerned on a micro-narrative, and 'micro-power' level, not as a teleological *grand récit*. The non-linearity of the text and the many unresolved questions point to a lack of closure which is also thematized within the novel. Certainly the lack of closure casts the novel as non-autonomous, 'failing' to unify into an authoritative and self-sufficient discourse or truth, a situation which has resulted in some readers qualifying their responses with the anticipation of the promised sequel volume to *The Matriarch*.<sup>7</sup> However, the effect of the open-endedness within *The Matriarch* is, I believe, more important. The implicit dependence upon other knowledges, other texts, enacts the open-endedness of a living, as opposed to museumified, culture. Rather than forcing martyrdom to 'tradition', this open-endedness enables change and growth to be conceived of within the terms of *agency*, including the appropriation of useful tools and knowledges. If it is possible to admit, for example, that Riria wanted Thomas Halbert "because he was strange. A

Pakeha. She was curious about the strangeness" (34), then an active agency has been posited which allows for the active negotiation of the ambivalent effects of such an encounter. This is most clearly illustrated in the rebuilding of the meeting-house, Rongopai:

In the way of the young, the glorious colours and the exuberance had been applied with little reference to tradition, an obvious break with the past. But I have always liked to think that the prophet [Te Kooti] would have approved, for just as he had blended the Christian faith with the Maori culture to speak for the people in the new world, so also had the young people attempted to show the blending of the old ways with the new and the world of the Maori in the lands of Pharaoh. (190)

The description of Rongopai presents an exhilarating bricolage, but concludes with the affirmation, "We still live. We still breathe. We are still Maori" (195).

The events of Artemis' life culminate in the dramatic events on the Wellington marae in 1949, but the attempt to reconstruct the truth and meaning of these is contextualised by the recollection of her accounts of the lives of the warrior-ancestor Te Kooti, and the parliamentarian-ancestor Wi Pere Halbert. Tamatea's attempt to unravel the meanings and mysteries of Artemis and the problematisation of that attempt are therefore two constitutive aspects of the text combining to raise questions of knowledge, truth, and identity. Certainly the centrality of Maori and the construction of counter-discourses are essential aspects of the novel; but the effect of these is predominantly one of questioning modes of knowledge, of a post-colonial epistemological rather than (post-modern) ontological focus. *The Matriarch* incorporates the thematics of identity, land, belonging, discursive territory, authority and authenticity, textuality and history, while instantiating and invoking in the process of its reading (both the readings it enacts and those it produces) the analytical problematics of subjectivity, hybridity, abjection, paranoia, contamination, and agency which have constituted this thesis.

To argue that *The Matriarch* is paradigmatic is not to say that it is 'typical'; indeed its *difference* from preceding fiction has been noted. Peter Beatson termed it New Zealand's "first real 'problem novel' since it contains no clear indications of how it should be interpreted," and observed that it "contains moral paradoxes rare in both Maori and Pakeha

literature."<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that 1986 also saw the publication of *Symmes Hole* and *Potiki*, both novels which effect reconsiderations of broad sweeps of New Zealand history, which premise authentic (national) identity on Maori, and which pose particular challenges to and problems for the dominant European-informed reading practices in that country. Further, it could be argued that many of the problems presented by *The Matriarch* were encountered earlier in relation to Hulme's *The Bone People*: the mix of realism and fantasy, the representations of mythic and historical time, character and plot credibility, and questions of Maori 'authenticity'. Certainly *The Bone People* does not pose the same problem of unifying voice that *The Matriarch* does; if anything, it manifests the opposite problem of their distinction, as the voices of a number of characters converge on Kerewin's. Yet arguably to a greater degree than other New Zealand novels, *The Matriarch* refuses to offer any privileged reading position, thereby positing no privileged post-colonial 'subject'.

One way of approaching the difficulty of constructing an identity or a settled 'reading' of *The Matriarch* is to examine two statements within two critical responses to the novel which appeared in reviews shortly after publication. Janet Potiki concluded her review with the declaration that *The Matriarch* "is a taonga in the search for redefinition of ourselves within Aotearoa and beyond;"<sup>9</sup> Alex Calder began his review with the observation that "Witi Ihimaera's *The Matriarch* seemed to have all the status of a civic monument well before publication."<sup>10</sup> Both affirmations of the significance of the novel, these two statements apparently lead in opposing directions. Potiki's invokes Maoriness as both the quality of the text (taonga) and the context of its reception and significance (Aotearoa). It creates an aura of authenticity and even 'presence', as the taonga is precious in its own right and refers to traditional time, while the 'civic monument' is, in this context, a Pakeha image which refers to historical time, and invokes the absent presence of representation: a monument is not so much a precious or important object as an object which signifies an important figure or event. Thus two differently accented statements of value invoke two different politics; but this is where tensions *within* each of the statements problematise the unidirectionality or integrity of their discourse. Calder's 'civic monument', while representing history and modernity, is a static image which functions as an aesthetic *sign*, while Potiki's 'taonga' is, importantly, a 'tool' in the service of the search for self-redefinition, an active image evoking change and growth. In this sense,

Calder's description refers also to, or invokes the establishment of, tradition (stasis), and Potiki's, history (change).

This tension both between and within their discourses exemplifies Simon During's argument with regard to the cultural and discursive politics of settler-majority post-colonial states, where

a politics of identity replaces a politics of enlightenment. There the project of the colonized peoples becomes the preservation of a cultural identity (supposedly) grounded in the era before the modern to which current needs and wants attach. And New Zealand . . . stands as the paradigmatic instance of such states, because . . . it is here that the border which divides and joins the politics of enlightenment to the politics of cultural identity is most fiercely contested.<sup>11</sup>

*The Matriarch* and discourses produced in response to this text are located exactly on this border, where each contaminates the other, abjecting the subject of each. It is an abject position for the subject of 'culture', and for the reading subject, for it offers no readily available or privileged position from which it is purely identical with itself. Instead, there is a non-identity, difference, or negativity, which is productive of agency: the politics of cultural identity constitute an Imaginary sphere which is articulated through Symbolic principles of enlightenment, or modernity; at the same time, those principles require an Imaginary wholeness of identity to which they attach, and which are offered in Maori discourses of cultural identity. It is the vertiginous oscillation between these moments which abjects the subject of post-colonial traditional cultural identity and the subject of post-colonial modernity; but their separation is only possible as a paranoid and idealist gesture.

Such gestures are made by two further reviewers of the novel, locating them at opposite poles of a literary-political spectrum. Both C.K. Stead and Atareta Poananga vilify the text for its difference from their own literary-critical assumptions -- and the difference of the text from 'itself' -- and at the same time they disavow the difference or tensions within their own discourses. However, the critical positions of each are at least articulated, including their assumptions about the function of literary writing. Stead asserts that "the true work of fiction [is] to make us see,"<sup>12</sup> and in deploring Ihimaera's "political posturing", argues that "His proper task was the craft of fiction. He owed it to himself to write a more considered novel -- one which used the language more scrupulously. Everyone would be better

served by a more truthful image."<sup>13</sup> Conversely, Poananga complains that "There has been little or no critique of how or where Maori writing can contribute to the promotion of Maori values./Instead, the craft aspects of writing are emphasised; technique, style, the mastery of European criteria. - of what good writing is supposed to be."<sup>14</sup> She believes that the work of Maori writers "needs to be evaluated according to *our* indigenous consciousness."<sup>15</sup>

It would appear then, that the discourses of Stead and Poananga are radically opposed: for one, literature is an autonomous field instantiating internal aesthetic governing principles; for the other, it is a means to an end, and it is evaluated according to the principles which govern that extra-literary end to which it appeals. Both are forced to articulate their assumptions about the function of art, and each assumes the paranoid position of excluding (the terms of) the other: Stead excludes politics from his critical practice, while Poananga excludes the 'craft aspects' of writing; both exclude the impact, influence, encounter with the racial, cultural other from their notion of literary form. It is now theoretical orthodoxy that opposite poles of a binary opposition are implicated in each others' constitution, so it is quite predictable that they will appeal to the same grounds or criteria of self-constitution. As a result, their discourses share a border of identity and difference, stasis and change, and in the case of discourses on *The Matriarch*, tradition and modernity, culture and enlightenment. While the articulation of polar positions is a (paranoid) response to the hybridity of, and abjection (of a privileged position of pure and autonomous subjectivity) threatened by such a border, these positions are inevitably drawn back to it. Thus within the opposition may be found both troubling and enabling middle grounds. Both Stead and Poananga posit forms of autonomy and integrity -- Stead's called 'aesthetic' and Poananga's called 'cultural' or 'racial'. Similarly, both actually posit literature as a 'decolonising' force. Poananga is explicit about it, claiming that "It is crucial that indigenous literature be a decolonising force,"<sup>16</sup> and that the means to decolonisation is the promotion of Maori nationalism. Stead, on the other hand, implicitly posits literary decolonisation in the guise of a mature literary nationalism, the artistic evolution from colonial status to writing which, in its coherence, effects a denial of the depth of colonial fragmentation. Thus while Stead's nationalism is Eurocentric, Poananga's is similarly overcast by the shadow of Europe.

Both Poananga and Stead appeal to notions of realism and 'truth'. It is not a literalist notion of realism to which Stead appeals, but an aesthetic consistency and integrity, enabling the reader unproblematically to 'see' through the transparency of language, that language whose 'scrupulous' use produces the 'truthful' image. In other words, Stead's truth conforms to principles internal to (a certain conception of) language itself. Poananga grounds 'truth' and 'reality' outside of language, but still conforms to a notion of language as transparent to these principles. Her realism is at times literalist. She objects, for example, to a passage in *The Matriarch* which describes the manner of Artemis' birth: To the passage which describes "The Matriarch. . . . The midwife saw at her birth not only that one eye was swimming in blood. She also saw that the Matriarch had her hands at her own throat as if attempting to strangle herself" (50), Poananga responds that "the latter is impossible for a new born child."<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, whereas Stead objects to a lack of 'artistic truth', Poananga deplores what she regards as errors of fact in recording Maori traditional cultural practices. Against a central premise of the text's representation of Artemis' grandeur in defying protocol to speak on a marae, a right normally reserved for men, she invokes the discourse of historical certainty to correct misconceptions:

The marae was *never* a patriarchal institution before the Pakeha. The paepae, the front seat, where Maori men in some tribes sit for the whaikorero, was a *post-European* invention. It has now become an important symbol reflecting male power. Ihimaera makes much of the matriarch *daring* to challenge this male prerogative of speaking rights. In doing so, he reinforces all the mythical traditions about Maori women.<sup>18</sup>

It would seem that Poananga objects to the representation of post-colonial manifestations of Maori cultural practice, which after all is the only possible context for the discourses within *The Matriarch*, favouring the 'purity' of 'pre-colonial' cultural tradition. Her argument invokes Tiffin's observation that the processes of subversion and appropriation which have informed literary decolonisation have "frequently been accompanied by the demand for an entirely new or wholly recovered 'reality', free of all colonial taint." Given the nature of the relationship between colonizer and colonized, with its pandemic brutalities and cultural denigration, such a demand is desirable and inevitable. But . . . such pre-colonial cultural purity can never be fully recovered."<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, this impossible demand underlies the grounding of Poananga's criticism, in the name of 'pre-colonial authenticity,' of the representations of patriarchy and sexism in *The Matriarch*. She has referred to the novel as "a profoundly woman-hating book,"<sup>20</sup> and challenges many of its basic premises about Maori cultural practice. Along with the contestation of the notion that pre-European marae operated in patriarchal fashion cited above, she objects to the constant assertion in the novel that

women were not tapu (sacred) but noa (common), and for this reason are usually not allowed to speak on the marae. Doing so invites dire consequences. This is patently false. All Maori, men and women, have their *own* tapu; it is not gender specific. Women possess their own tapu, as do men, they were and are allowed to speak on many marae. That all women are restricted because to speak would violate the marae and male tapu are post-Pakeha rationalisations.<sup>21</sup>

There are a number of problems raised by this statement. The first is the question of her own access to the truth of traditional authenticity. A paradox here is that authenticity is located at least in part on a temporal scale in relation to origins, and so the closer to the 'original', pre-colonial state of Maori culture that information was collected, the more authentic it is likely to be. Yet textual sources are dependent upon literacy, a situation exacerbated by the disruption to oral transmission of cultural knowledge effected by urbanisation and dislocation. It is not possible to reverse the disruptions to 'knowledge' effected by the infiltration of literacy into an oral culture, a point which Poananga implies in her own observation that "Like Eve in christian mythology, in Maori mythology women [sic] was created by man (one wonders about the extent of Christian influence here, since Maori sources for these myths are post-colonial and told by Maori men to white men)."<sup>22</sup> Earliest sources are most likely to be the recorded observations of white officials or anthropologists themselves. Therefore, despite temporal closeness to origins, reliability is 'contaminated' by 'inauthentic' subjectivity. As a result, Poananga argues,

Pakeha, women included, have unquestioningly accepted the Pakeha version of the status of Maori women, historically and in the present. Books and research conducted by Pakeha male and female academics have generally portrayed the lives, roles and status of Maori women as oppressive, inferior and secondary to that of men. Maori men since colonisation have generally accepted this, for several reasons.<sup>23</sup>

Among the reasons she gives is the "socialisation" of Maori male consciousness according to the imperatives of colonisation, a process she figures purely as imposition rather than as interaction and adaption, which themselves are implied in her suspicions about the construction of the 'Maori' creation myth. However, this points to a second source of information about Maori cultural practices and beliefs: white transcriptions of Maori informants. Even these raise the question of the status of information given to be transcribed; its interpretation is ultimately a reading of both that information *and* the subjectivity of the informant. In a different context, During suggested that (questionable) assumptions which may underpin the reception of cultural information include "that the enunciating subject . . . is the 'Maori' rather than particular individuals or *iwi* (tribes); . . . [that] utterances were constative rather than illocutionary; and . . . that their propositions refer to a coherent body of esoteric knowledge."<sup>24</sup>

Thus it is necessary to return to the question of the source and status of Poananga's own authority. The irretrievability of orally transmitted 'traditional' knowledge from within a post-colonial, literate and urban context leaves a gap, or a silence at and as the origin. Poananga fills it with the noise of *refutation* and *assertion* -- claims that representations are "patently false," that women "have their *own* tapu." Ironically, she also uses white sources to inform her own discourse of contestation. She cites Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* in her challenging of the misogyny she attributes to *The Matriarch*, and Jane S. Jaquette's discussion of archetypal literary representations of female characters.<sup>25</sup> Even 'tradition' is rendered epistemologically void, even risky, as Poananga accuses Ihimaera of "blending 'fact' which masquerades as 'tradition', borrowed from *white* sources, with fiction,"<sup>26</sup> and argues that "Maori men's sexism is now little different to that of their Pakeha counterparts -- except they use so-called 'traditions' to legitimate and laud their superiority over Maori women."<sup>27</sup> The fact that Poananga and Stead both appeal to 'truth' and realism points to their identification (and disavowal) of two types of truth and two sources of truth. The *effect* of their contradictory claims to the 'same' values is to destabilise notions of truth itself, indeed to *politicise* it, and by extension to politicise the discourse(s) which 'produces' it.

To return now to Poananga's argument about men's and women's tapu and their right to speak on the marae, and to relate it back to *The*



*Matriarch*, she overlooks a crucial aspect of the events on the Wellington marae in 1949. Artemis seeks to speak not on her own, but on another marae, and thereby provokes specifically inter-tribal rivalries. In almost totally ignoring this reading of Maori disunity, Poananga more successfully accommodates her feminism within her Maori nationalist discourse -- or vice versa. Collectivity of subjects and unity of subjective consciousness characterise her reading assumptions. Thus she focuses in her review upon specific women characters and their relationships, reading them in terms of their assumed status as representational (of 'real people') and representative (of 'women', or 'Maori women'), and consistent with this, is critical of the representations of women's power in the novel: "This is not the power of Maori women as we know it; embracing, nurturing, and positively directed."<sup>28</sup> The assumptions underpinning Poananga's response instantiate the problem of reading in post-colonial New Zealand that a 'collective' or 'communal' indigenous ethos collides with the dominant settler 'individual' one. As a result, a character may be read not simply as an individual but as representative of a group, culture or race (Maori women); and in a social context of indigenous struggle (and of Pakeha desire), such representations are under pressure to be positive. However, Poananga finds that "The women characters that are created are destructive stereotypes of women, the mother and the daughter consumed by rivalry over men. Their natural strengths and closeness as women are never a feature."<sup>29</sup> The assumption of women's *natural* closeness is symptomatic of the grounding of her argument in 'pre-colonial' authenticity or tradition for a reading which is only possible in the post-colonial context of consciousness of patriarchy and sexism. Indeed, she evokes the difficulty of expressing respective status, and the nature of the social relationship between men and women: "I hesitate to use the word 'equal' for it inadequately describes the relationship. In a sense, a comparison with Pakeha cannot be made. Ours as *Maori* was 'normal.'"<sup>30</sup> It is only by obscuring the tribal social context of rivalries that she is able to posit women's 'natural closeness'; and only within the post-colonial ontological and epistemological 'fracture' with the plenitude of the past (as 'normal', where tapu was not gender-specific), is she able to constitute 'women' as a 'group'.

The critical affect which greeted the novel may be characterised by Alex Calder's telegrammatic "WOW STOP BUT."<sup>31</sup> Even if the 'WOW' refers only to the sheer size of the novel, most responses have been impressed,

or simply overwhelmed, and at the same time troubled. A theme that runs consistently, and arguably *centrally*, through critical responses to *The Matriarch*, is that of the novel's *failure*. Usually this is an evaluative rather than an enabling descriptive term. The most insistent source of failure has been the critical identification of the text's lack -- failure -- of unity. *The Matriarch* manifests, for some critics, a lack of imaginative unity. For example, in Michael King's view, "Ihimaera's vision is not sufficiently penetrative to unify the many disparate parts into a single work of the imagination." He continues that "Most dissatisfying from the reader's point of view is that the novel fails to tie up the dangling questions it raises about the grandmother's shadowy past, leaving a feeling of immense dissatisfaction."<sup>32</sup> Elizabeth Caffin similarly argues that "What is missing in a novel of undoubted power is a single confident artistic vision, that engagement with the capacity of language to transform."<sup>33</sup> Stead, whose overall evaluation of the novel is that "for me it certainly [fails]," identifies an important source of failure in the lack of unity of tone and voice: "In style the novel moves from conventional fiction, to expository prose, to rhetorical argument, to historical record (including many pages of *Hansard*). The tone swings back and forth between the gradiose and the banal. All this puts a great strain on any sense of artistic unity."<sup>34</sup> A third failure of unity has been identified by Janet Potiki, who argues that "While the device of having the story told through the eyes of many different people in different times is challenging, it distances us from the unity of each event and makes the overall work less cohesive."<sup>35</sup> *The Matriarch* is therefore judged to fail expectations of the unity of imagination or artistic vision, of tone and voice, and of event.

It is certainly not my wish to contradict these claims, to discover unity, but rather to examine their implications: what do they seek to unify?, according to what critical and political criteria is unity sought? My questions are consistent with the spirit of Calder's observation that "these expectations of a 'penetrative unifying vision,' of seamless narrative progression, of characters whose past is wholly resolved, wholly knowable, are only apparently natural; they are genre specific, genre bound."<sup>36</sup> Calder who reads the novel as (failed) 'epic', points not simply to its failure, but to the necessity of its failure in these terms, thus historicising and relativising the genre itself. Similarly, while Williams does not shy away from the notion of failure, he contextualises it, so that the term is more descriptive than baldly evaluative: "this matter of organising perspective, of the place

from which the narrative voice proceeds, is a cultural as much as a literary problem for the author."<sup>37</sup>

The desire for unity and the failure of unity identified in critical discourse about *The Matriarch* actually doubles the textual and discursive strategies of the novel itself. In other words, this tension -- or failure -- may be extended beyond the discourse of literary criticism and thematised as the post-colonial cultural critique *performed* by Ihimaera's text. While 'readings' seek to control meaning and stabilise identity, the effect of *The Matriarch* is to desire unity and to work against it, showing it to be at best illusory, at worst an insidious political post- or *re*-colonisation. Therefore, *The Matriarch* abjects the subject of the 'reading', casting her/him into an abyss of ambivalence (WOW STOP BUT) occasioned by this border of unity and fragmentation. The desire for wholeness (with the past, with the self) sought by Tamatea through the attempted recovery of the original presence of Artemis, is in conflict with the desire for subjectivity through which that wholeness of original presence could (ideally) be articulated. Desire for wholeness always tends towards the silence which is the end of desire; such wholeness therefore poses the danger of engulfment in a plenitude which absorbs and suffocates the subject. At the same time, the desire for subjectivity and autonomy is dependent upon the loss of the plenitude of origins. The question of how to speak origins -- one of the questions of *The Matriarch* in its 'discourse of Maori identity' moment -- may never be resolved; origins fall into an abyss of silence. Jonathan Lamb cites Geoffrey Hartman on language, but the point is applicable more generally to cultural identity: "'The extreme result of ideas of purity in language is glottophagia or swallowing one's tongue.' Domesticated, the paradox would work something like this: Try to transcend the silence at the pseudo-origin by the big voice of a genuine originality, and you'll fall back into silence."<sup>38</sup> In such a context, Lamb argues, "originality is in a direct relation to muteness."<sup>39</sup> Indeed, the problem of recovering an originality in language or cultural identity is precisely that language and cultural identity are predicated on an irreversible departure from origins. Nevertheless, neither *The Matriarch* nor the settler post-colonial cultural context could possibly be characterised as an abyss of silence; if origins are silent, they themselves emerge as a veritable clamour of discourses.

How then do fragmentation and unity work in the novel? The thematisation of their irresolution may be found in the problematisation

of the mirror of mimesis and identity. The belief that the function of art is to 'make us see' is questioned by showing that we cannot simply *see*, but that we are subjects of a *gaze*. In *The Matriarch's* enactment of the ambivalence of the mirror relation as both unity (the Imaginary illusion of wholeness) and fragmentation (the split into perceiver and perceived, a split disavowed by narrativising the connection through the articulation of the illusorily whole 'I'), the novel problematises the naturalness or givenness of both identity and narrative. Mirrors are invoked from, and indeed *as* the outset of the narrative: Artemis has told Alexis of Tamatea, "I have made him into a likeness as unto me" (13). When Alexis tells this to Tamatea, it becomes the instigating moment of the text: "It was Uncle Alexis who started it all" (1), narrates Tamatea, and as he embarks on the search for the meaning of Artemis' expression of a relation of likeness between them, he reflects "I think the matriarch would have approved of this. After all, she was the one who turned my own life into fiction from fact" (1). There are two contradictory directions in which this statement leads: on the one hand it becomes clear this early that Tamatea's search for the truth of Artemis is also a search for himself, pointing to an original unity, an archaic plenitude, of their identity: Artemis has declared that "the manner of our births was the same and we have been created one and the same" (113);<sup>40</sup> on the other hand, the statement itself reverses the 'expected' movement *towards* the plenitude of truth and instead points away from it towards language, and the processes of myth-making. Tamatea will only achieve an "imaginative reconstruction of the woman who wore pearls in her hair, the matriarch who ruled the Mahana family for three generations" (1). Yet even the phrase 'imaginative reconstruction' invokes both the idea of the 'fictional' -- a departure from a form of 'truth' --, and that of the Imaginary, which is the mirror reflection of wholeness.

Images of smashed mirrors dramatise the fragmentation of the subject. Uncle Alexis, whose health is failing and whose eyesight has failed, whose initial response was the refusal to speak (to instantiate and to disavow his fragmented condition, or lack of wholeness), demonstrates the inevitability of the fragmentation of the subject by smashing all the mirrors in the house and exposing the whole mirror reflection as an illusion: "'This is a house of the blind', he said, 'and the blind don't need mirrors'" (356). His regained is associated with the shattering of Imaginary wholeness.<sup>41</sup> There is also an incident in Artemis' life which addresses the

dangers of the illusions of Imaginary wholeness posed by the mirror of mimesis. When, in her sinister encounter with an elder on the Wellington marae in 1949, Artemis is observed to transmute into a giant devouring spider, the young Tamatea perceives her trapped behind its multi-faceted eyes, and smashes them in order to release her: he "stepped suddenly to one side and, reaching up, shattered the dark crystals of its eyes so that they fell like mirror shards around him" (266). The reference to mirror shards suggests that she has been trapped in some illusory space, perhaps within the illusion of her own powers (she admits, "'My invocation took me too far'" (266) ), or else by the myths and legends created about her and her powers, themselves culminating in the illusion of her transmutation -- an image or bodily reflection of psychical or spiritual powers. The 'realisation' of the spider is long prepared for in the text by the imagery of her black gown and veil, and by that of spinning (76), and weaving, both suggesting the web: in the eyes of the young Tamatea, "grandmother wove such magic" (105; see also 247; 397). However, as the fragmented representation of Artemis' character (and the 'meaning' of this occurrence) suggests, her release from behind the eyes of the spider does not confer her with *presence*, but with the broken shards of a self fragmented in and by language. Similarly, if Tamatea is created as a 'likeness unto' Artemis, then the implications of these broken mirrors must be addressed in relation to his fictional identity or character, and to the unity of his narrating subjectivity.

This problem of the 'characters' of Artemis and Tamatea has been critically observed. Stead is irritated by the hazy and unclear images of both Artemis and Tamatea, asking for example, "what exactly it is that the matriarch achieves:"

She is represented as triumphant against all odds, having to call up magical forces as well as her powers as an orator and as tribal and family politician to defeat her and Tamatea's enemies. What the outcome of all this effort appears to be is the protection of the mana of Tamatea. But Tamatea has little identity in the story except as its narrator, and recipient of these benefits.<sup>42</sup>

Although Tamatea is implicated in the novel's 'failures' of characterisation, the meaning of this failure may be located through an analysis of the 'failure' of Artemis. It is her 'character' which seems most to compromise the conventions of the humanist realist novel in terms of which critics like Stead insist upon reading. He complains, in relation to

the characterisation of Artemis, that "The language becomes florid as if with the effort of conjuring into being a greatness that has no foundation in fact, nor even, perhaps, in the imagination of the novelist. At no time did I really believe in the greatness of Artemis. Worse, I was never entirely persuaded that the novelist believed it either." Pointing to a passage of such florid writing, he concludes that "every one of these over-written passages . . . diminished my sense of the reality of the figure whose stature they were meant to enhance."<sup>43</sup>

But *were* they? More important than Ihimaera's intentions, though, I would argue that the alienatingly florid declarations of greatness function as enactments of alienation in and by language; language itself is foregrounded, problematising the accessibility of Artemis as *presence*. She functions in *The Matriarch* in part as evidence that language is the only means by which identity may be articulated or known. Further, her representation in language may be read as the articulation of *desire*. Tamatea's narrativisation, his search for the meaning, of Artemis, posits her as the object of his desire; in fact it locates her as a *representation* of his desire for meaning, identity, and plenitude. She is not the lost object, but the mark of loss. In 'his' search for 'her', the mark of his desire, and 'unto whom he is a likeness', Tamatea is both perceiver and perceived, rendering Artemis essentially absent, merely a representation. Thus Tom Weston is correct when he notes that "She figures as a two-dimensional object, a key actor, but in a set piece,"<sup>44</sup> as is Calder, who observes that "As a character, the matriarch has *zero-degree* of interest. She is invoked, not described, not 'gone into.'"<sup>45</sup> The point is not to seek some interest in Artemis herself, but to attend to what precisely is invoked in Tamatea's pursuit and representation of her. Similarly, Tamatea functions as the figure of the reader, the post-colonial subject/writer of cultural identity, whose excesses in language in the attempt to represent Artemis (the cultural plenitude of the past), reflect the excess of possible representations (the competing readings). Among the many different and often contradictory accounts, legends, anecdotes, attitudes and influences which comprise her, Artemis cannot be fixed. Tamatea's uncle, Whai Mahana tells him, "Beauty, intellectual skill, and the ability to debate in a hostile arena -- these are the three things that your grandmother had. She was a real Maori woman of the kind about whom legends are told" (26); but later he is told by his Aunt Hiraina, "Of course you're talking about the legend not the person." She continues:

"People used to think that your grandmother Artemis was some kind of witch. That she could stop the sun. Or change into a spider. Or cause nga pungawerewere to fall upon the elder of the paepae. Rubbish. All these incidents were coincidental. . . . Your grandmother believed in God, Tamatea. She was a Godly woman who prayed to our Atua every morning and every night. No such woman would ever have been possessed by the devil. Certainly not Mum." (354)

There is, conversely, the cynical, unattributed view that she "made a religion out of herself. . . . It wasn't just love she demanded of all of you. It was veneration. She chose you [Tamatea] to be her high priest" (447). Evidence and substantiation themselves belong to the order of language and subjectivity.

The excess of representations of Artemis is further compounded by the operatic-theatrical motif, which governs both her representation and indeed the organisation of the text itself. The non-autonomy of her, (and) of post-colonial identity, is demonstrated in the associations of the Verdi operatic passages which comprise many expressions of patriotic or nationalistic sentiment.<sup>46</sup> Passages from *Nabucco*, for example, make allusion to the Old Testament account of captive Jews in Canaan, which in turn invokes the discourse of Te Kooti and his Old Testament based Ringatu religion, "the power of the [Maori] people in bondage in Egypt" (136): "*Arpa d'or ... O simile di Solima ai fati traggi un suono di crudo lamento ... Golden Harp ... Just as for the cruel fate of Jerusalem, intone a strain of bitter lamentation, otherwise let the Lord inspire you with a meoldy to give us strength to suffer ...*" (292). Further, Verdi passages draw in the Italian Risorgimento, for which he served as 'musician-laureate', and which itself is echoed in the 'dual-armed' struggle of Te Kooti and parliamentarian Wi Pere Halbert respectively against Pakeha appropriation of Maori land. Finally, these passages and their associations converge in the figure of Artemis, descendant of Te Kooti and Wi Pere, who apparently travelled to Italy, and whose mission, "To save Waituhi" (15), addresses political land issues in settler society. It is she who sings the arias, and thus she may be understood as the culminating figure of these far-reaching associations and motifs of Maori/Italian/Jewish/Ringatu unification into identity, in resistance to foreign domination: "*A costro schiava non sono ... della mia patria degna saro. I am not a slave ... I will be worthy of my native land*" (13), she sings from *Aida*. She is likened to a diva: "There is a photograph of the Italian diva, Renata Tebaldi, which

suggests something of the look of the matriarch in later years. . . . The matriarch was like a diva herself" (13). The quality of her voice is described in such operative terms: "Her voice was honeyed and loving, intimate and full of pride, and there was a tinge of triumph flooding through it like a glorious cantilena" (285); even her spoken words "filled the air with ageless music" (294).

The non-integrity of (her) identity is invoked in the artifice represented in the theatrical motif: Artemis as artifice. Images of her (self-)cultivation, of her self as image, of her roles and performances, abound in the text, dramatising the impossibility of locating a true or essential Artemis. Whai Mahana recalls, "'she looked so fantastic with those pearls and black gowns, quite out of place. She had a mystique, and I'm sure she cultivated it on purpose'" (26). Further, at various points, the manner of her (self-)representation means that she is 'misrecognised' as a large black bird (210), a giant devouring spider (265), and an Italian heiress Miss A.R. Marchesi. Tamatea discovers a report in the social column of the *New Zealand Herald*:

'An affecting scene was enacted when the retired MP, Mr Wi Pere Halbert, met young Italian heiress, Miss A.R. Marchesi, just off the American Queen. . . . Her hair was dressed in the Italian style with pearls at the nape of the neck. Her complexion was olive from the Mediterranean sun. Suffice to say, however, that she surprised all, when Wi Pere responded to her, by calling in Maori to him.' (436)

She makes entrances and exits, and is concerned with timing and effect. Throughout the text, the journalist's accounts of Artemis' appearance and speaking at the 1949 hui stress the theatricality of her actions and timing. The account of the tension Artemis caused by keeping the Prime Minister waiting at the hui reaches a dramatic climax:

'Let the door be closed,' the elder said.  
The door closing, closing.  
The matriarch bent her head in grief.  
She covered her face in her veil.  
'Tutakina te tatau.'

....  
'Homai te toka ki ahau,' she said.  
The door closing, closing.  
'Bring me the axe.' (407)



The veil she wears suggests the stage curtain: "('And as you were looking at her, she reached up with her hands to her head and *began to pull her dark veil back down and over her face*')" (76). The italicised words draw attention to the dramatic significance of the co-incidence of this action with the eclipse of the sun: "('The veil slowly descending. And as it did so, the clouds began to join across where once had been a brief space of sunlit sky./'So be it,' the matriarch said./With a ponderous rumbling, like iron gates closing, the sun began to go out')" (78). The journalist refers to the incident as Artemis' "brilliant coup de théâtre" (92).

The operatic-theatrical motif extends to the structuring of the text itself, and the representation of other characters and events, foregrounding the status of the text as artifice. Structured in five Acts, it suggests the theatricality of opera, comprising drama, music, dance, costume, stage-setting and more. There are episodes introduced by passages which read as stage directions, such as the narrator's theatrical allusion upon introducing Wi Pere Halbert's story: "It is now time to bring in from the wings the matriarch's great-uncle, the Honourable Wi Pere Halbert. . . . I have at least given you the stage to yourself. . . . But one stage direction, just one -- while you are telling it, think of yourself as *the Maori with his own hands around his neck*" (301). Other passages are suggestive of filmic techniques, such as fade-ins and fade-outs, and even 'special effects' of lighting and sound. For example, Tamatea is gradually constructing his memory of Artemis:

There is no noise at first; simply a whistling of the wind through cracks in the bone and a conjuring of the ghosts. Then the sounds begin to tighten, take shape, take form. The breath from the throat stirs the magical powers so long locked inside the runes . . . and the song begins. The song stirs other runes, but in one's own memory, teasing and shifting back the dust in concentric circles, eddying outward. Something begins to glimmer there. A wreath around a face. The face of a patrician woman. The matriarch. (18)

Later the narrative account of the Matawhero Retaliation is divided into three parts: "*Prelude*" (143), a musical term; "*Close-Up*" (145), a photographic or film term; and "*The Attack*" (160), which evokes drama or film. The mixture of performance metaphors is consistent with the governing opera motif.

Within this bricolage, even the intertextuality and the exposed textual seams draw attention to both the plurality and the constructedness of *The Matriarch*. Within the Acts there are chapters, within which are 'episodes'. Chapters are numerically identified and seem less important as structures in themselves, but serve to draw together collections of episodes. The latter are the most visibly and insistently fragmenting structures in the text, varying in length from a few lines (see 196; 228), to a number of pages (213-220), and separated into blocks of text by rows of stars. They are fragmented between time frames of mythic, historical and personal past, and non-chronological narrative 'presents'. Intertextuality also fragments the narrative. Much of the fourth Act, "The Statesman," comprises speeches by Wi Pere Halbert taken from the Parliamentary *Hansard*. The text also encompasses, as well as Tamatea's narrative, excerpts from a document prepared by Wi Pere and handed to the *Gisborne Times* shortly before his death (301); letters, such as that of Te Kooti to Governor Grey (174-6); government and journalistic reports; personal testimonials and eyewitness accounts of crucial events. Throughout the text, but particularly in the second Act, "The Song of Te Kooti," the Bible is invoked in Artemis' discourse. The novel offers no sense of getting to its/Artemis' 'true' meaning or identity, but rather, enacts the search itself and the necessary failure of its *desire* for unity.

Just as non-autonomy and non-integrity govern the *différance* of textual and character identity, so are history and narrative events devoid of unity and stability. As has been noted, Potiki is concerned that the many voices and viewpoints of *The Matriarch* work against the unity of events. However, within the context of the novel's multiple fragmentations, this would seem to be precisely the point. There is a counter-discursive moment, for example, in the re-naming of what has been known in Pakeha historical accounts as the Matawhero Massacre. Glossing the account of his historian friend John Lawrence, Tamatea explains that

when he refers to the 'Matawhero Massacre' what he is really referring to is Te Kooti Rikirangi's *retaliation* against a whole history of Pakeha abuse of Maori people, custom and land. He is referring to an attack made by Te Kooti Rikirangi in return for his false arrest and imprisonment on the Chatham Islands -- Wharekauri. He is referring to an act of *utu*. (71)

This emphasises the centrality of subject-position in conferring unity or meaning on events, that such meaning does not inhere in them. Then

Ihimaera goes a step further than producing the counter-story: within this 'new' context or meaning, details are unstintingly provided which once again invoke the description of 'massacre' (170). Thus the events have not simply another meaning, but more than one meaning. The discourse is perhaps consistent with Tiffin's description of counter-discourses which "seek not just to expose and 'consume' the biases of the dominant, but to erode their *own* biases."<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, the multiple meanings do not co-exist peacefully in a pluralist 'utopia'; they are in active competition. The journalist, who for the moment assumes a position on the 'high ground' of objectivity, concludes that "All truth is fiction really, for the teller tells it as he sees it and it might be different from some other teller. This is why histories often vary, depending on whether you are the conqueror or not" (403). Yet, despite his opening qualification, it is inevitably subject-position which effects the measure of 'truth'. Tamatea is in search of 'truth' and is hence concerned about the reliability of his sources, and "misrepresenting the past" (219). Grounded in 'Maori identity', counter-discourses are presented which mock as they rewrite the meaning of hegemonic historical accounts:

The Treaty has . . . been praised for its high-mindedness, its Attempt at an Honourable Solution to Accommodating the Needs of the Pakeha (and Maori), its Integrity. The trouble is that the Treaty has never had any status in domestic or international law. The Pakeha signed it knowing it was worthless.

Now from te taha Maori, the view is different. The British Crown has consistently broken its contract (and all you Pakeha lawyers can argue until the cows come home that the Treaty wasn't a legal document but we believe it is). (73)

Such representation -- and re-presentation -- of history in *The Matriarch* troubles both Stead and Poananga. Stead objects quite bluntly that "the film of history can't be re-run to suit the moral values of the present moment,"<sup>48</sup> a view which begs the question of when history has ever not been written according to (at least someone's) current moral values (including the ethics of scholarship). The implication that there is a site of transcendent truth is specifically problematised by much post-colonial writing, including fiction, as Tiffin argues: "by forcing re-readings of fiction through history and history through fiction [post-colonial texts] emphasize the complicity of western narrative and history in that process [of material capture and annihilation of alterity], deliberately eschewing an

apparently transparent realism."<sup>49</sup> In relation to *The Matriarch*, Williams points out that

Stead's view fails to do justice to the novel's ambitions and to the particular pressures -- cultural and historical -- which influenced [*The Matriarch's*] manner of construction. Ihimaera's understanding of history is so radically different from . . . Stead's that to accuse him of misrepresenting history is, from one perspective, simply to miss the point. The question is, *whose* history is being misrepresented?<sup>50</sup>

And yet these questions of point of view and truth seem almost redundant in the light of Stead's own expression, 'the film of history', implying already the status of history as construct and as artifice, even invoking the suggestion that it is not 'true'! In other words, Stead's own appeal to transcendent truth -- the truth of history, itself *outside of history* -- is couched in terms of an artificial construct which depends upon *point of view*.

Poananga also criticises the novel's misrepresentation of history. She argues that "*The Matriarch* is a clear political statement for it accurately reflects and condones a collaborationist and distorted approach to the history of Maori and Pakeha. Ihimaera does not begin to *understand* what colonialism is. *The Matriarch* is not promoting a cultural nationalism but seeks to bury it in conflict and unreality."<sup>51</sup> Poananga's discourse begins by opposing the distortions of (collaborationist) politics to history (colonialism), and yet reveals that the truth of history would be that which promotes cultural nationalism, an unquestionably political goal and one which at the same time curiously excludes 'conflict'. Indeed, she excludes the possibility of a reading of the novel as a textual dramatisation of colonialism and its cultural effects, whether or not this derives from Ihimaera's conscious political understanding. Further, she is forced to hold 'colonialism' and 'cultural nationalism' in radical opposition, disavowing the emergence of the latter as a hybrid product of the former. Perhaps most ironically, in claiming that Ihimaera buries history and cultural nationalism in 'unreality', she accuses the novel of being fictional. This latter point of course echoes Stead's own reference to the 're-running of the film of history', at the same time as it reaches back to the very *different* functions of literature articulated by Stead and Poananga.

The representation of historical events on the Wellington marae in 1949 serves as an illustration of the desire for textual unity and the

problematisation of that desire in the textual fragmentation effected by them. By appearing in fragments they instantiate narrative and textual non-unity, and the desire which effects the continuation of the narrative journey; however in recurring throughout the novel, the events comprise an incident which to some extent unifies the narrative. Similarly, the 'incident' draws other episodes and events into itself as the reader is presented with (often italicised) phrases, and repeated, retold events which echo earlier ones, as if these have all pointed to the latest moment or event, or as if subsequent ones relate back to an originating moment of meaning. For example, we read of the eyes of the elder being smothered by spiders, "'Help me. Help me', they pleaded./ '*Have mercy upon me*'" (353). Similarly, Tamatea recounts, "I looked again at my Aunt and her eyes were pleading, '*Have mercy on her*'" (357), and we recall the supplication in the passage from Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* sung by Artemis, and uttered at other points throughout the text: "*Miserere, miserere d'un povero cor miserere di me, Signor. Have mercy, have pity, have mercy on me Lord*" (341). Each of these refers to different narrative strands and motifs, but their echoes suggest the possibility of finding connections between them. Thus it is possible for the reader either to construct a large teleological narrative which moves ever forward to ultimate enlightenment, or to construct an account whose authority is grounded in the authenticity of origins and whose echoes simply reproduce (the meaning of) an originary moment.

Nevertheless, either narrative strategy requires the active engagement of the reader in a process which must foreground reading as process rather than passivity, as construction rather than discovery of meaning. That meanings (or readings) do not offer themselves up naturally is enacted in the non-autonomy and non-integrity of the account of the 1949 events. In the third Act, "The Time of the Spider," episodes of the account are interspersed with that of the voyage of the ancestral *Takitimu* canoe from the mythical origin of Hawaiki, to and around New Zealand. The reader is encouraged to read the one through, or in relation to, the other. Similarly, the account of the events on the marae foregrounds the multiplicity of perspectives and beliefs, making it impossible to determine from within the text itself, a privileged reading. Tamatea compiles and presents transcripts of interviews with individuals who were present when the 'falling spiders' incident occurred. However, beyond consensus that spiders descended in great numbers from the rafters of the dining hall, the

nature and the meaning of the incident vary from one witness to another. The first is alerted to the falling spiders by the direction of Artemis' gaze, but he attributes no greater rôle to her in the incident than this. His reference to the spiders in Maori, in the context of a predominantly English-language narrative ("And then they came, nga pungawerewere" (348) ), suggests his interpretation of their significance based in 'Maori tradition'. The second witness implicitly attributes the precipitation to Artemis' spiritual powers through the juxtaposition of ideas in his narrative:

'And above all else she had a power that can only be described as supernatural. . . . Then she shouted in Maori, it seemed like a shout, and it was like having a thunderbolt flashing through my head. . . . I saw these beautiful webs, like fragile cathedrals, strung between the rafters. Suddenly, they ripped open. Hundreds of small black spiders suspended from crystal threads, began to fall like a black cloud.' (349-50)

The third witness, in contrast, attributes the incident and its larger meaning to God, and to the battle of good and evil which culminated in her own 'salvation': "The elders say that what happened was my deliverance from evil. They say that it was not accidental that I was there. I was chosen to be there" (350). The fourth produces an entirely naturalistic explanation, contextualising it within accounts of similar incidents on previous occasions: "It must have been the vibrations or sounds which caused the spiders to appear in so dramatic a fashion" (352). Finally, the fifth declares unequivocally, "It was she, Artemis, who caused them to do this. I swear it" (352).

These accounts demonstrate the encounter of different ontologies, epistemologies, and even eschatologies, pointing to a problem for representations of 'reality' in settler post-colonial writing. Referring to Ihimaera's textual strategy generally, Williams refers, for example, to the use of 'fantasy' in *The Matriarch*, but argues that it is "fantasy in a very particular sense. Here fantasy is regarded not as a mere departure from reality, an escape into daydream or wish fulfillment, but as an imaginative means of giving expression to interpretations of experience other than the dominant one."<sup>52</sup> He thus suggests that discursive power relations -- dominance and marginalisation -- influence the *need* to employ fantasy as a tool for the expression of ontological and epistemological difference, while fantasy is posited *as* the representation of that marginalised

knowledge and reality. It is surely an ambivalent gesture to employ the marginal to represent marginalised reality.

However, I would argue that the effects of the alternation of the mythical *Takitimu* journey narrative and the 1949 marae events suggest a complexity in discursive power relations, as well as ontology and epistemology, which is characteristic of settler post-colonial New Zealand. The myth may be read as providing a quest narrative which grounds Artemis' discourse, and even the events themselves, in an *originary* moment, the moment whose plenitude she invokes to authorise her position and her discourse. It is therefore, despite the 'fantasy' of the journey narrative, an 'authenticating' textual-discursive gesture. At the same time, though, the myth-narrative itself demonstrates the interpolation of specifically twentieth-century, and more importantly, post-colonial, 'inauthenticities'. When the felling of the tree to make the canoe is described as including "a symbolic stroke, not touching the bark at all, *yet the tree is seared, as if by laser*" (255), we may regard the importation of twentieth-century scientific terminology as an example of continuity across time, the evolution of oral narratives along with changes in the social context, rather than simply as an example of post-colonial alienation from authenticity.<sup>53</sup> Even the inclusion in the narrative of passages such as "And should any person abuse the tapu then, lo, the penalty was death, just as surely as it had been death in biblical times for any person who touched the Ark of the Covenant" (255), while betraying the discursive and substantive infiltration of the Bible, may be read as continuity through cultural syncretism. This too is more closely related to the *process* of narrative evolution than to the post-colonial self-consciousness and epistemological fracture evident in the following passage of the myth narrative:

The cargo of gods. The more mundane minds have imagined them as being mere carvings of wood and stone, relics representing the children of Ranginui, the Sky Father, and Papatuanuku, the Earth Mother. I like to visualise the gods as being creatures of light and darkness, gods of the Maori pantheon. (260)

The unalienated consciousness would not have imagined the gods as anything but simply the gods, while the reference to the "Maori pantheon" belongs to a cultural self-consciousness which is post-colonial. Similarly, references to "the other *legendary* canoes" (264; my italics), and "*legendary*

beasts" (274; my italics), bespeak the disconnection from the plenitude of 'original belief'.

There is an encounter within each of the mythical (*Takitimu*) and historical (1949) discourses, so that the terms 'mythical' and 'historical' cannot be purely and autonomously attributed to each respectively. For while the *Takitimu* narrative has been historicised, the 1949 marae incident has attained, through association, juxtaposition, and discursive interpolation, a legendary status. Both are therefore legends, one of long standing and the other in the making. Along with the encounter of the mythic and the historical is that of the sacred and the secular. In settler post-colonial New Zealand, the power relations between them are more complex than dominance and marginalisation. Each *desires* the other, and neither fully attains it; yet nor does it retain its own integrity.<sup>54</sup>

As I have stated, *The Matriarch* exemplifies the centrality and, in settler post-colonialism, the problem of the reader. Further, the novel actually thematises this problem in addressing issues of genealogy, issues which become of focal importance in the 1949 marae incident. Genealogy apparently offers itself up as a 'natural' text, 'written' by biological 'fact', but this is shown in *The Matriarch* to be an oversimplification. Indeed, even 'biological fact' is a problematic notion, particularly for a patrilineal genealogy, for spatio-temporal reasons whose implications were explored in Chapter One. This problem and the implications of the Maori cultural practice of reciting genealogies (whakapapa) expose the political constructedness of lines of descent and relation, dependent upon the political exigencies of recognition, so that the recitation could be characterised as narration involving the narrative practices of selection, exclusion and connection. Whakapapa reach back to the beginnings of mythical time, to the gods, and progress through the honouring of ancestors. They are "the history of the people" (230), recited in order to establish the mana of a speaker or an iwi, to establish lines between people and the land, the belonging that confers the right to speak. However, inclusion in the whakapapa or genealogy depends upon recognition, and exclusions serve political ends. For example, it is narrated, in *The Matriarch*, in relation to a dispute over land, that Thomas Halbert had two sons:

It was Riria who bore the son Wi Pere Halbert. . . . During the hearing of his claim to the property he stated that Wi Pere Halbert was his



only child at the time of the purchase. His omission of Otene Pitau can be explained only by the suggestion that, as Lazarus had adopted that child, Thomas Halbert felt he had no further claim. What is important here, however, is that Thomas Halbert acknowledged Wi Pere as his son and heir. (34)

This pattern is doubled in the issue -- the focus of Act Five, "Succession," of whether Te Ariki, Tamatea's father, had another older son. Tamatea confronts Te Ariki: "'I need to be sure on one matter, Te Ariki. Is Toroa my brother?'/ 'I have already told you, no'./'. . . Is Toroa your son?'/ 'And on this I have told you also, no'" (394-5). The rivalry is initially played out between the grandparents Artemis and Ihaka, and relates to their own differing lines of descent. Ihaka is of Tuhoe descent, and the implication is that the boy Toroa is Te Ariki's son by Awhina, a Tuhoe woman whom Ihaka had wanted him to marry to forge a link, for political reasons, with his own people, for "'a gift connection may be severed, a human link cannot'" (365). However, Artemis has determined that Tamatea, son of Te Ariki and Tiana, is the eldest son, and Te Ariki largely complies by avoiding public acknowledgement of Toroa. When Ihaka intervenes to make Toroa his foster-child, the matter is further complicated, and the battle is finally fought between Toroa and Tamatea, first through Tamatea's three renunciations of Toroa (398), and then in spiritual-physical violence (401).

Central to Maori political life, and ultimately textual constructs whose meanings are written and read, genealogies in *The Matriarch* instantiate the problem of the post-colonial reader. Maori reading positions are problematised by the account of rivalry between Tamatea and Toroa, as Ripeka Evans explains:

[Ihimaera's] portrayal of Tamatea and Toroa can only occur in an inter-tribal context. Tamatea, the main male character of the story, takes his name from the ancestor who captained the Takitimu canoe. Toroa is also an ancestral name. Toroa was the captain of the Mataatua. The names themselves are endowed with mana and tapu and symbolize the iwi to which they belong. Those descended from Toroa could, and perhaps would in Maori terms, be affronted that their tupuna's name is used and abused when Tamatea takes away Toroa's mana. So you see a seemingly interesting by-play for Pakeha readers between characters in the story has other connotations for Maori readers.<sup>55</sup>

This is partly a problem of the rivalry being played out beyond the marae, beyond the localised context of a specific battle for supremacy, where only participants and their supporters or detractors are present, now disseminated into a much wider readership and with no structures of redress; in other words, it is the problem of the dissemination *and* the fixity of the text. Perhaps too, the problem is the (post-)colonial one of the constitution of the racial and cultural group, 'Maori', a hybrid identification invoking metonymic readings which conform to the binary pair of 'Maori' and 'Pakeha'. For example, a 'Maori' spiritual counter-discourse constructed and placed in opposition to the Graeco-Judeo-Christian derived 'Pakeha' tradition places an unexpected strain on the very authentic originality it invokes:

The many retellings of this cosmic genealogy in *The Matriarch* are more than an innocent introduction to the basics of Maori mythology. They have a double ideological and political function. They work to confer a central position in the universal scheme of things upon the Maori, who have been marginalized in Western cosmology.

....

But . . . by foregrounding the legends surrounding his own canoe, the hero of the novel makes daring political use of his mythic ancestry during his in-fighting with tribal rivals. Having placed the Maori at the centre of the cosmos, Tamatea goes on to place his own family, and ultimately himself, at the centre of Maoridom.<sup>56</sup>

It would seem that it is the constitution of the hybrid 'Maoridom', in relation to Pakeha, which has made such a centring gesture possible. Further, it is a secularising gesture of hubris; but even as such its 'meaning' is ambivalent: on the one hand it could be argued that the hubris of Tamatea exemplifies that of the reader, placing the self at the centre of a universe of expectations, values and judgements; on the other hand, to place the reader at the centre of the text demonstrates the dependence of truth and meaning on reading itself, challenging the notion (itself a 'reading') that these inhere in the text.<sup>57</sup>

To locate meaning in the reader renders meaning, and the identity of the text, unstable and ambiguous. It emphasises the divisions and fragmentations of a culture. Where the desire for unity and meaning and cultural identity characterises the narcissism of a settler post-colonial society, images of fragmentation are disturbing and are resisted. In a text such as *The Matriarch* which appears to offer no fixed or even privileged

reading, it is not surprising that critical response should turn to the figure of the author to stabilise and fix the meaning, to *authorise* a reading, to identify and even instantiate a privileged subjectivity. Thus Beatson notes, "It is hard for the Pakeha reader to know how much Tamatea's passion for personal and family prestige is 'approved' by the author, how much he is being condemned for the sin of hybris [sic] or the related Maori offence of whakahihi."<sup>58</sup> Here, the novelist is appealed to as the centre and guarantor of moral value in the text; even readings critical of it are predicated at least to some degree in critiques of Ihimaera's subjective coherence, producing some remarkable slippage between Ihimaera and Tamatea. Their conflation is symptomatic of a desire for unity and an intolerance of instability or difference. For example, Stead argues that "It is almost impossible to see [Tamatea] as separate from the novelist, which in turn makes the whole work appear to be a gross piece of personal mythologizing."<sup>59</sup> It does not occur to Stead that his search for the wholeness of character is a trap laid by the novel, and so the 'failure' of Tamatea results in the displacement of that search on to (readings of) Ihimaera.<sup>60</sup> Even the latter are charged with the burden of the wholeness of the ideal-image. Stead appears indignant that "On p. 370 Ihimaera repeats Te Kooti's cry -- 'We are still slaves in the land of Pharaoh.' It is strange coming from a man much honoured in his own country and now serving as New Zealand Consul in New York."<sup>61</sup> This argument constitutes a suppression of difference -- textual difference, and the difference of Maori protest -- in holding the narrative to the author's subjectivity, and even his extra-fictional 'success'.

Poananga's reading of the novel through the (read) subjectivity of Ihimaera similarly seeks to suppress difference, though the emphasis is on difference *within* Maori (and its critical metonym, Ihimaera). She locates the split nature of subjectivity represented in the novel in terms of the existential experience of the colonising/colonised culture, and expressed in terms of 'hands around their own throats' (50; 79; 80; 127; 301), to "Ihimaera's own inability to resolve his identity confusions. . . . This is a dilemma for anyone who cannot choose between being indigenous or being part of the occupiers. . . . [S]uch people are referred to by Maori as 'split-arse'."<sup>62</sup> She understands identity as a matter of conscious choice, and *Maori* identity as identification with Maori nationalist politics, so that Ihimaera is deemed an outsider -- expressed as 'such people' and 'split arse' by Maori -- in the same review that is predicated on the need for

accountability of *Maori* writers like *Ihimaera* to the values of nationalism. In her argument for the unity of *Maori* consciousness, suspicious of the Pakeha approval attained by *Ihimaera* and n generally of adulation afforded *Maori* writers in New Zealand.<sup>63</sup>

This adulation of the *Maori* writer is indeed a phenomenon in need of analysis. Williams has observed that "The rise of the novelist as 'star' in the middle eighties, with Hulme and *Ihimaera* as revered figures, helped book sales, but it did little for the state of the novel as an art form in New Zealand."<sup>64</sup> I want to set aside the question of 'the novel as an art form,' or at least to deny it the status of an autonomously aesthetic question, and to regard 'book sales' as something more than a matter of interest to publishers and retailers. Instead I want to focus on the phenomenon of 'novelist as star' itself. The term 'star' evokes, in this age of television, video, MTV, an *image* which, simultaneously smaller and larger than life, is transmitted into the very living spaces of the population. It would seem to overshadow the more solitary and invisible connotations of the figure of the novelist. Yet the term 'star' is remarkably apt. If the 'star' of the visual and sound entertainment media is understood precisely *as* image, and if that image is understood as the ideal self/other (that ambiguous mirror reflection which instigates relations of identification -- narcissism and aggression), and if novelists such as Hulme and *Ihimaera* are analysed as *image*, noting for example, radio, television and magazine 'appearances' which construct and market them as such, some important questions about reading in post-colonial space emerge. It becomes necessary to ask what their images represent, and what desires for identification they address. What cultural or national anxieties -- subjective fractures -- are 'sutured' by (dis)placing wholeness on to an ideal-other? Which subjectivities are appropriated to this function? Why should it be, for example, Hulme and *Ihimaera* who have been afforded 'star' status, and not, again for example, Stead himself -- the academic, critic, fiction writer, poet, cultural critic, all-round 'man of letters'?

Clearly, *Ihimaera* and Hulme address particular cultural and national anxieties of settler post-colonial New Zealand. To the Pakeha reading position they offer, both in themselves and through texts conferred with the status of mirrors reflecting a national self, consciousness, or cultural identity, an image of the 'self' as indigenous, soothing the anxieties of belonging which attend the de-legitimation of colonialism. Where the

questions of 'Pakeha culture', and of national unity, are similarly anxious ones, they offer the perhaps vicarious experience of cultural (re)construction. At the same time as such post-colonising appropriations occur, identification with the images represented by the likes of Ihimaera and Hulme flatters national narcissism regarding the ethical 'wholeness' of social justice; to put it crudely, these writers represent Maori success in a Pakeha-dominated cultural milieu. Conversely, for a Maori reading position such writers also embody *Maori* literary subjectivity and success, but from the point of view of gaining an active voice in the construction of a literary culture -- the opportunity to add new stories, challenge existing ones, rewrite history. This is commonly imaged as a kind of cultural 'healing' of a people, beginning to re-effect the discursive community and continuity among Maori that was disrupted with the effects of large-scale urbanisation on oral cultural transmission. Therefore, much national/cultural value is invested in these ideal 'representations' or images of the (national/cultural) 'self' of settler post-colonialism. Similarly, the state of the novel as art form, and book sales, could be argued to indicate wider than purely 'aesthetic' desires and criteria as constituting literary production and consumption in the settler post-colonial context. The text is not simply a cultural object, but a cultural 'tool'.

It is now necessary to foreground, however, a problem with the attempt to stabilise meaning and identity through the figure of the author which has been implicit in my argument so far. The problem with the notion of the author's subjectivity, when this is assumed to conform to and to confer principles of identity and unity, is that it is only emergent in the acts of reading and writing themselves. 'Subjectivity' is not something the author simply *has*, but rather 'it' is read through her/his discourse. It is only accessible through reading. This means that a reading position emerges simultaneously with a writing- or speaking-position, and we have already seen the destabilising influence of the 'reader' for notions of transcendental 'truth'. This explains why, even when *The Matriarch* is read through the figure of Ihimaera, Stead can conclude that "we have the novelist as warrior, the novel as taiaha or mere, the reader as ally or enemy,"<sup>65</sup> images of violence and conflict, while Poananga characterises the novelist, in relation to the same text, as "split-arse,"<sup>66</sup> and the novel as "Maori apologism."<sup>67</sup> Further, the notion of the 'star', whether novelist or any other cultural figure, is one caught in a tension between the *public*

implications of a role -- the screen/image on to which expectations and demands are projected, and which is the object of dissemination and 'readings' -- and the *private* spheres of identity, autonomy and integrity which define the 'individual'. The tension is predicated on a disavowal of the illusory or Imaginary status of the 'individual'. It is grounded in that moment when the public image appeals to the private identity to authenticate itself, and in reproducing and disseminating that identity (as image, but as 'true'), sets up an apparent paradox, one which inhabits, for example, the genre of autobiography. The tension is similarly present when the public image is defined *against* the private self, such as the writer or artist who insists that her/his text does not simply mirror a private self, an argument which foregrounds 'creativity' and 'originality'.

A parallel tension inhabits the image/text itself: between its public position, its status as reproduced, disseminated and read, and its legal (copyright) status as privately owned and its claim to authorial creative or scholarly originality. It is within the context of these tensions that *The Matriarch* problematises author-centred readings and indeed any notion of subjective coherence. It has already been noted that *The Matriarch* refuses a single narrative voice, or even a stable and stabilising controlling consciousness 'behind' the many narrative voices. Similarly, the wide-ranging intertextuality of the novel's composition functions to problematise simple notions of original authorial creativity. Rather than positing the individual as productive of narrative or text, it therefore suggests that texts are socially produced. Indeed while *The Matriarch* is explicit about its debts to prior reading of other texts, the point is relevant to all cultural production. If culture is a social concept, how can its product be other than socially produced?

There are specific issues which arise in relation to *The Matriarch*, and to reading practices in settler post-colonial culture. It has already been noted that the novel has been criticised for a failure of unity of tone and voice. One source of this 'failure' has been identified as the many passages of 'didactic' information provided in the novel -- Maori mythology and beliefs, explanations of Maori cultural practice and protocol, in many cases drawn from other textual (and oral) sources. The question which is suggested is that of the cultural *necessity* of such intertextuality (and a concomitant degree of disruption in narrative coherence) in a context where reader knowledge of cultural underpinnings cannot be assumed.

The question spreads to include reading practices in relation to texts whose reference to other cultural knowledge or texts is not explicit in the narrative, but whose assumptions or premises are grounded in these other knowledges.

Nevertheless, Ihimaera does refer to other texts and this, too, generates problems of reading. On the one hand, the status of 'sources' raises political issues of authenticity and acceptability. As was seen in relation to Poananga's review of *The Matriarch*, 'white' sources are increasingly challenged as inauthentic compared with the 'authenticity' of Maori sources which represent either Maori accuracy, or political expediency. On the other hand, (although related to this latter point), 'authentically' Maori knowledge was shown in *The Matriarch* to raise the problem of its status as specific to a particular tribal background: this problem includes both its reading or representation as 'Maori', and that of its contestation as a matter of inter-tribal politics and difference. One example of this occurs in relation to the novel's use of the spider motif. Poananga objects to it on the grounds that spiders are 'traditionally' bad omens for Maori.<sup>68</sup> Further, although it could be argued that their appearance in *The Matriarch*, including in the form of Artemis' characterisation, conforms to their significance as 'ominous' this raises another problem for Poananga for the reading of the motif: "It reveals the power of Maori women as spiderlike -- weaving webs of mystical and physical destruction, hate, evil, and manipulation over the men in their lives. Maori women using spiritual power to entice and entrance men and once having captured their prey, sucking the life out of them."<sup>69</sup> The problems suggested in the 'reading' of the spiders recall those which were discussed in relation to a feminist reading of the texts. In fact this argument is a moment in such a reading, and although it problematises the reception of the novel in a post-colonial context, it further illustrates my contention that post-colonial 'contamination' is *productive* of readings, and of discourse. Nevertheless, there is still the question of (the suppression of) *other* meanings or significance attached to spiders in 'Maori tradition'.<sup>70</sup>

Another implication of the social production of the text is that it problematises its private ownership. How can something produced in interaction with the wider network of practices, discourses and texts which comprise the cultural context, be *owned* by the individual? Yet, if *The Matriarch* critiques and dismantles the individual as cultural producer, the

Pakeha law reconstitutes it as owner of cultural property. The New Zealand legal system reflects the cultural origins of the settler-descended majority and accepts private ownership of writing under copyright; and further, despite his textual manoeuvres against individual creative autonomy, Ihimaera's own novel is subject to copyright. How then is one to read the lifting of whole passages, unacknowledged, from the *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*,<sup>71</sup> itself still under copyright? Despite the consistency of the gesture with the general direction of the novel's strategies, it is inconsistent with his practice of acknowledging other textual and oral sources. Indeed, it could be argued that inconsistency is more 'consistent' with the novel's 'failures' of narrative and textual unity, but it would nevertheless seem clear that there is an argument of plagiarism to be made. Williams has argued the issue of plagiarism cogently in his own discussion of *The Matriarch*, and it need not be rehearsed here.<sup>72</sup> However, I wish to focus on his important observation that "there is at least an unconscious irony in the fact that the material he has appropriated from Sorrenson deals with a much more significant act of appropriation: the taking of Maori land after the Land Wars of the mid nineteenth century."<sup>73</sup>

Despite the unquestionable fact that the appropriation of Maori land throughout New Zealand's history of white settlement and the appropriation of passages from the *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* are incomparable in terms of scale and significance, I would suggest that it is useful to hold the incomparability of scale as a sobering qualification while positing, in different terms, their comparability, as implied in Ihimaera's gesture. In this context the meanings and significations attached to each -- the land and the encyclopaedia -- may be explored. In other words I wish to address their specific comparability, the common ground of land as 'text' and text as 'land'. An encyclopaedia is commonly understood as a collected body of diverse and comprehensive knowledge, while etymologically, the emphasis is on the encapsulation and containment of that knowledge. Further, its contents conform to the ontological and epistemological norms of the socio-cultural context of its production. In this spirit, the claim is made in the Foreword to the encyclopaedia that it contains, in its three volumes, material "covering all aspects of New Zealand life."<sup>74</sup> Similarly, Tamatea's discourse, indeed the whole text, posits the land as the source and object of knowledge for Maori culture;



Tamatea describes the land in terms of a text, its scope determined by landscape features or mutually decided boundaries:

These boundaries, and the stories attached to their making, would be memorised. In this way, the entire land was like a living geography text and history book in one. The minutiae of life . . . all imprinted and still living, inscribed on the land. And to ensure the continuity of the tribal memory, the people would traverse the land from time to time and from generation to generation. (103; my underlining)

I have emphasised those terms which are explicitly textual, but others such as 'geography' and 'history' have epistemological implications -- they name categories of knowledge -- and the process of maintaining continuity of knowledge by traversing the land suggests the *reading* of the land. An early lesson Artemis teaches Tamatea is that of reading the land, and in doing so to produce his own subject-position, the distinguishing of self and other: "'This is our land, mokopuna. *Here*. Now *look*. There, is the boundary between us and the Ngati Porou to the east. There we have the Whanau A Apanui to the north. There, to the south, we have the Ngati Kahungunu people with whom we have close affiliations'" (5). Boundaries are implicit in the formation of subjectivity, and they establish tribal identity, where a people are known in relation to their land. Conversely, it is necessary to 'know' the land if one is to know oneself:

'Because this is your land, you must know it like it knows itself, and you must love it even more than it loves itself. You must get to know its very boundaries, e mokopuna, and every part of it because without this knowledge you are lost. Without it you do not possess the land. You become a person without a homeland.' (95)

Clearly, much of the significance of the land lies in its conferral of belonging and identity. A similar effect is achieved in the title of *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*. It organises its contents under the identity of New Zealand, defining inclusions and exclusions in relation to this expression of place. Indeed, through a kind of metonymy, the encyclopaedia could be understood as a textual representation of, or the epistemological and ontological mapping of the nation.

The encyclopaedia and the land are linked by questions of discursive authority, by their shared implication in issues of property and propriety. Thus as well as Imaginary questions of identity and belonging, their relationship invokes Symbolic ones of authority and the law. The latter,

while characterising the discernment of self and other, and establishing subjectivity in relation to place (or specifically land, in *The Matriarch*), are also foregrounded in *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*. The very existence of the encyclopaedia was the result of a Government Cabinet decision, we are told by the editor, whose Preface bears the authorising under-signature of Parliament House. The text bears all the authority of the Law; and considering the submission of all textuality to the law of the Symbolic, it is not difficult to forge another link between the text and the land in post-colonial culture as the land, too, is inextricably enmeshed in the processes of textuality and legality. Textuality fulfils a central but ambivalent role between unification and fragmentation in post-colonial Maori land-claims.

'Land' as theme and motif most strongly effects narrative and textual unity in *The Matriarch*, and at the same time manifests post-colonial cultural and discursive fragmentation. Thus an examination of discourses of the land in the novel may serve as a 'case study' of many of the novel's features, within this treatment of *The Matriarch* as a case study in relation to the argument of the overall thesis. The land constitutes a unifying motif in the novel, in that it underlies the central concerns or events of each of the five Acts. In the first, "Waituhi," the land is shown to be the basis of 'traditional' family life. Yet there is also an ambivalence in expressions of this relation, for they are premised on a prior departure from that 'original' relation, as Tamatea narrates upon his return from the city: "Every approach to Waituhi was a rebirth. At the same time it was also an acknowledgement of loss, for this was the womb of my life and it had given life to the family of the womb, generation after generation" (90). The second Act, "The Song of Te Kooti," concerns the Land Wars of the 1860s and their aftermath in confiscations of Maori land by the Crown and the exile of Te Kooti Rikirangi Te Turuki to Wharekauri -- themes of dispossession and dislocation within the textually unifying motif of the land (see 133ff.) The third Act, "The Time of the Spider," centres around the protest against the loss of Maori lands, in the Maori form of a hui and on Maori ground of a marae, and brings to a crux the notions of the inextricability of land and identity. It illustrates the self as known through belonging to a particular land, and the function of the land in conferring subjectivity -- the position from which, and the right to, speak. The identity of Artemis with the land is invoked as we are told that "Her voice

struck the reverberating drum of the land, and the sound boomed out, loud and long. . . " (293). However, although she tells Tamatea that "For the moment it is sufficient that you understand about your turangawaewae, this footstool which is yours in this land between Maunga Haumia and the Waipaoa" (292), it is her own transgression of the laws of subjective propriety -- the right to speak conferred by standing on one's own land -- that is a principal source of contention on the Wellington marae: "The matriarch, a woman and therefore not tapu, was standing where only men stood. Yes, she was high-born, and she had spoken on the marae in her own lands, but this marae was outside her tribal boundaries and therefore could give her no genealogical and spiritual protection" (111). The fourth Act, "The Statesman," changes ground in the struggle to retain Maori sovereignty over remaining Maori lands, from the Maori marae to the Pakeha parliament. It represents transcriptions from *Hansard* of speeches by parliamentarian Wi Pere Halbert, relating to particular land Bills and Laws. Finally, the fifth Act, "Succession," draws together most of the principal episodes of the text, and perhaps because these are so many and diverse, the unifying function also effects a narrative fragmentation. Issues of continuity and belonging, and of struggle, in relation to the land, reach a climax in the rivalry between Tamatea and Toroa over their respective positions, and their place in relation to the family land. For example, the terms of Tamatea's response when, during their youth Toroa moves from Rotorua to Gisborne, invoke the association of the sovereignty of the self with that over the land: "The first territorial incursion had been struck" (382).

Within this consideration of the centrality of land to Maori identity, therefore, is an emphasis on disunity among Maori, usually relating to differing lines of descent. In terms of a discourse of Maori nationalism, the representation of disunity among Maori would be understood as diverting attention from the real enemy -- the Pakeha.<sup>75</sup> However, on the one hand these territorial rivalries could be argued to reflect pre-European inter-tribal relations more 'authentically' than does a unified 'Maori' discourse, thus being consistent with the illocutionary, if not the constative, force of Poananga's invocation of authenticity in 'tradition'; and on the other, it would be useful to consider what the effect would be of representing a culture whose 'wholeness' is dependent upon unity with the land, which even in the (post-)colonial context of dislocation and dispossession, retains that core of wholeness. Nevertheless this argument must admit its own

disturbance by the recognition that 'Maori' wholeness or unity is, precisely, *inauthentic* in terms of pre-European tribal politics, so that it *cannot* represent any core of original plenitude. Overall then, the unification of the text through the concern of each of the Acts with some aspect of the land, is disrupted by the substantive issues of fragmentation these invoke.

As well as unifying the structural organisation of the text, the land is also that which unifies the various themes and categories of knowledge explored in the novel. Indeed, the novel suggests that cosmology, genealogy, history, journeys and identity attain their significance in relation to the land. For example, we read of the expeditious recitation of the genealogy as crucial to effect a waiver of traditional restrictions in order to meet the requirements of the new conditions of land protest. An unnamed Maori man at the hui tells a journalist:

"Now that this woman has established her right to be here, she needs to be welcomed in the hongī. And after that, then will come the real fireworks. This old lady hasn't come all this way for nothing. Although this is the last day of the hui, she will probably demand the right to speak about her lands on the East Coast. This is what all this is about -- the land." (246)

In other words, the land is shown to form the basis of Maori ontology and epistemology. Yet the basis of these activities lies in an understanding that "The Maori are the tangata whenua of this land, e mokopuna, always remember that. Our tribal histories tell us of the arrival of seven canoes to this Land of the Long White Cloud" (230), and further, that "there is a [spiritual] dimension beyond the physical world which you must understand. Then, and only then, will you truly be a person who will love the land" (293).

While an overarching concern with the land confers a unity upon narrative themes and events, it is also the ground of fragmentation, through acknowledgement of the conditions of dislocation and dispossession. These are what characterised colonial history for the Maori people: "*The land, always the land*. The Maori people possessed it, but the white man has always lusted for it. . . . Let's admit it: the Land Wars began when the Maori lost the upper hand in Aotearoa, and particularly around 1858 when the census revealed that in a small space of thirty years, there were already more white settlers than indigenous dwellers" (238). Similarly in the context of (post-)colonial society, we read of the

fragmenting impact of urbanisation on the possibility of Maori cultural continuity with tradition: "'it drove a wedge between the old and the new. How can the old generation teach the new generation if they are not there to listen? Ah yes, this is how the discontinuity developed between the old and the young. It was a great faultline, right across the population'" (232). It was a faultline not only within the Maori population itself, but between Maori and Pakeha, creating an identifiable class of poor citizens. Tamatea recalls "a university lecturer in Auckland who took his geography class on a field trip to Otara, pointing out the typically Maori ghetto dweller in his typically Maori home" (105).<sup>76</sup>

Against, but also in the context of, these dislocations, there are evocations of a traditional, spiritual unity with the land, attempts to express something prior to and beyond the disruptions of colonisation. However, the closer to 'origins' such discourse tries to reach, the more overtly alienated in and by language itself it becomes, recalling the same paradox which troubled the representation of the grandeur of Artemis. For example, Tamatea describes how the voice of Artemis

seemed to open a crystal gate, lifting the portcullis between ourselves and the past, and *we were in some otherworld*. A world where gods and men commune. Where timelessness begins and there is no separation of past and present. A world energised with glowing forces and creatures of light fading in and out of the landscape.

. . . . And her voice sounded a deeper drum. It splintered the physical landscape so that I was able to see into the essence of things. . . I saw into the geological structures of the earth, and the diamond sparkling structure of the mountains . . . were one and the same with the gleaming cellular structure of my body. (293; my underlining)

The range of reference and the anachronistic tension of some of the diction with the expression of 'timelessness' that is sought in the passage (examples of which I have underlined), compromises the 'transparency' of its effect to its object(ive). The attempt to convey the 'quality' of the vision draws on the unlikely metaphors of 'crystal' and 'diamond'; archaic references to 'gods' and 'creatures' combine with twentieth-century scientific discourses such as physics and biology which provides expressions such as 'energised', and 'cellular structure'. Further, the expression of the idea of a world beyond the physical resorts to the textual strategy of italics, as if sheer insistence would make the claim more believable. My point is not a rehearsal of Stead's argument that this indicates Ihimaera's individual imaginative failure, but rather to treat the

'failure' as symptomatic of a discursive impossibility: how *could* this idea have been represented *without* drawing alienating attention to the language itself? Such innocent transparency is lost at the very moment it seeks expression.

This paradox similarly haunts post-colonial articulations of Maori unity in contestation of Pakeha; in fact it is a moment of such articulation, for expressions of unity are necessarily predicated on a prior loss or fragmentation. Would such an idea *need* to have been expressed outside of, or prior, to the context of colonisation? There are expressions of solidarity with the struggles of ancestors, which enact the belief in the presence of the ancestors in an eternal present. Artemis tells Tamatea, for example, that "what happened to Te Kooti is what has happened to all of us unless we fight on and hold on to the truth" (133). The narrative includes an important episode in Maori protest against the loss of lands to the Pakeha -- the 1975 land march. The representation occurs in a manner which both implicitly and explicitly points to the effects of both unification and fragmentation. A rallying speech at the outset of the march exemplifies the implicit subjective division:

'The march promises to be one of the most significant events of the decade,' Te Matakite said, 'and to the Maori people, it will be the climax to over 150 years of frustration and anger over the continuing alienation of their lands. Land means much more to the Maori people than it does to any other New Zealander. To them it has a deep spiritual value. You can realise then the frustration the Maori people have had over the last 150 years as they have seen their lands gradually fall out of their hands'. (235; my underlining)

The speech begins in a manner which suggests a Maori speaker addressing a Maori audience, even articulating the collective identification, 'the Maori people', as a means of effecting group solidarity and identity with each other and with their forebears. However, this identification is disturbed by the reference to 'their' lands rather than 'our' lands, problematising the position of the speaker, and when the 'meaning' of the land to Maori people is articulated -- referring to 'them' -- the discourse is 'contaminated' by the gratuitousness of this explanation for a Maori audience. The question of whom the 'You' addresses is thus raised along with that of the subject-position of the speaker. An empirical explanation, such as a mixed Maori and Pakeha audience, is less the point than the increasing subjective fragmentation manifested in the discourse, its

ensuing didacticism further emphasising the encounter of different subjects and different epistemological codes. Thus, while aspects of the march are shown to have unified Maori people throughout New Zealand, such as the custom that "When darkness fell, they would make for a friendly marae, there to be formally welcomed by the tangata whenua of the land" (235), we read that at its conclusion "a splinter group developed of young protestors who decided to pitch a tent in the grounds of Parliament. . . . They were vilified by their elders; in turn, they accused their elders of having sold out to the Pakeha" (370).

Significantly, the figure of the Pakeha emerges as the force behind this disunity. Implicitly, the strategies of the young protestors invoke international forms of political protest -- the Black Power and anti-Vietnam war movements -- which locate Maori protest within an international discursive context. This both alienates it from the integrity of its own cause, and effects an identification with other indigenous and oppressed groups, a gesture which is specified elsewhere in the text.<sup>77</sup> According to the logic of binary opposition which locates the Pakeha at one pole of racial and cultural identity, and the Maori at the other, the Pakeha stands for the loss of Maori political integrity and subjective coherence. To the extent that actions can be identified with Pakeha beliefs and practices, they are alien or even actively antagonistic to Maori.

This binary opposition, one which informs the discourse of Poananga, is nevertheless both invoked and problematised in *The Matriarch* through exploration of particular characters' relations and attitudes to the land. Articulations of contestatory unity or coherence -- with Maori, or with one's own political struggles in relation to the land -- are compromised by (post-)colonial cultural and subjective fragmentation. For example, Tamatea's father Te Ariki describes the financial difficulties for his farm incurred by low wool prices and early sale of lambs. He explains of Tamatea's Uncle Danny, "he didn't put any money into the farm and he probably took a lot out, but he says different. He's asked for a third of the farm's value and I don't think he should have it" (56). Then, when Uncle Alexis asks for a piece of "prime land" for one of his sons to return to Waituhi and build a house, Te Ariki similarly refuses. As he explains to Tamatea, "Your grandmother gave that piece of land to me. . . . She said to me, Te Ariki, that land down by the river is for you and Tiana" (57). In

the ensuing debate between Tamatea and Te Ariki, it is Tamatea who reminds his father of Maori attitudes to the land:

'I can understand why grandmother gave you the land but, as I see it, the land is family land. You were the eldest son, yes, and she gave you the land, yes, but I think she gave it to you for safekeeping for the family.'

'She said it was for me and your mother.'

'It was not hers to give, and it is not yours to take for yourself and my mother. You should let Uncle Alexis have the land. It is important for the young people to return to Waituhi.' (57)

Despite Tamatea's clarity with regard to proper procedure, Te Ariki is not represented simply as the subject of his own selfishness, or even his individual interpellation by a colonised subjectivity. The debate between Tamatea and Te Ariki is less one between the culturally proper and improper attitudes of two subjects than between post-colonial social economy and Maori tradition. When Te Ariki admits to Tamatea, "'I don't know son, I just don't know. The family all seem to be crowding in on me these days wanting this thing or that. It is not easy'" (57), he recalls the basis of his reluctance to share the land in the current economic strain on the farm, the context of the relation to the land as an economic one, so that the family's needs and wants must principally be addressed with money. The mere possession of land is now economically insufficient in a predominantly urban culture in which farming is tied to (inter)national financial issues and markets.<sup>78</sup> Tamatea expresses Te Ariki's dilemma as "The Pakeha in him warring with the Maori" (58), and as crucial as the 'warring' relation in describing the different values placed on land, is the location of that war "*in him*".

The identification of the struggle as between Maori and Pakeha, and its location *within* the post-colonial subject, is expressed in *The Matriarch* most explicitly in terms of the essentialism of 'blood'. Artemis, Te Ariki's mother, is "Possessed of Maori and Pakeha blood" (50), the latter attributable to Wi Pere Halbert, son of a Maori mother, Riria, and a Pakeha father, Thomas Halbert. These lines of descent provide a context for Artemis' own declaration of individual claim to a piece of land: "'This place is very important to me. . . . It was important to my great-uncle also. He gave me this piece of land to be mine and mine alone. Everything else is held in common by all but this earth -- ' she bent down and clawed at the dirt ' -- is mine'" (424). Two generations before, Wi Pere's anger over his



Pakeha father's sale of land which was to be his birthright, the anger arguably attributable to his own Pakeha blood, prompted him into parliamentary politics. Pakeha 'blood' is therefore found at the source of Maori expressions of individual possession of land.

It might seem that the descent lines 'contaminated' with Pakeha 'blood' from the early nineteenth century are demonstrated as redeemed in Tamatea's insistence upon the principle of family land, and the importance of the return of young people to these lands. However, to take his discourse both at face value and as unproblematically the centre of moral privilege in the novel would be to overlook the context of his own position of privilege. The novel represents a socio-cultural context which extends beyond the benefits attained by Tamatea into a more ambivalent picture of Maori struggle and survival. Artemis' choice of Tamatea as her successor has implications for other family members. Her daughter Circe argues that "'To give him all would be to make the rest of us destitute. I will not agree to signing away our birthright'" (360). The cost to the other family members, measured in terms of a spiritual sickness (357), is implicitly related to the economic changes and social ravages wrought by urbanisation. The form of Tamatea's cousin Raina's 'sickness' is determined by the urban environment in which she and her family live. Alcohol, drugs, prostitution, and theft all comprise both her *mate* and her means of survival on the streets. Further, Tamatea himself is not consistently the subject of coherent principles of Maori traditional belief; his own irretrievable loss of origins is dramatically figured at the novel's conclusion in a nightmare sequence which is represented as the culmination nightmares which began early in his childhood. As Calder points out, "as Tamatea explores his memories of childhood . . . he finds not identity but the murder of identity, not the guarantee and solace of an origin but the frightening displacement of origins."<sup>79</sup>

*The Matriarch* is a novel which is problematic for any reading position, for it offers no image of 'wholeness' -- 'political' or 'aesthetic', subjective or cultural -- which would resolve the text's difference, and with which to identify. Yet if it did offer such an Imaginary wholeness, this would constitute either a disavowal or a misrecognition of *difference*, manoeuvres which characterise the colonising gaze itself. It would be to enact an elision of history, subsuming the very ground upon which contestation of (post-)colonial oppression depends -- contestation which

includes the project of rewriting history as a crucial strategy of decolonisation. Indeed the textual 'wholeness' of subjective coherence and narrative seamlessness would constitute the text as metaphorical 'land', which may itself be colonised, invoking (post-)colonising identification which would amount, in Margery Fee's memorable phrase, to a "literary land-claim."<sup>80</sup>

Instead, *The Matriarch* enacts, as it addresses, the subjective and historical fractures of colonisation, and the instability of a culture on the faultline, the border between indigenous traditional identity and the European historical project of enlightenment. Thus, it posits 'land' as the basis of traditional Maori identity, as the context for the cultural production and transmission of mythologies, cosmologies, genealogies, politics, and social protocol, as the grounds of spiritual and physical well-being; *and* it illustrates the post-colonial identification of land as the ground of healing and renewal of a disrupted, dispossessed and dislocated Maori people and their culture; but it also problematises the link between the past and the future through the eternal present/presence of the land by exploring it fully *within* the post-colonial society which now inhabits it. The post-colonial context has altered the nature of the Maori relationship to the land. Within the logic of urbanisation which accompanies nationhood -- a nationhood which suppressed Maori identity and difference -- land becomes a commodity, and productive of resources, within an exchange economy which interpellates as its privileged subjects of consumption the individual rather than the community, the nuclear family rather than the whanau. Further, Maori relationships to their own cultural identity are problematised, as inter-tribal politics are disrupted by and themselves disrupt, discourses of unity in contestation.

The novel does not resolve these tensions: land remains central, though its meanings and significance continue to instantiate the difference and the struggles of the traditional and the modern. Indeed, in this way *The Matriarch* may be seen as paradigmatic of post-colonialism in New Zealand. It is the site of discursive encounters -- not the tolerant encounters of inclusiveness and indifference, but discourses in violent struggle for epistemological and ethical supremacy. The text eschews the post-colonisation -- the silencing of discourse and difference -- which would be effected by their resolution. Further, and perhaps most crucially for an understanding of the complexities of settler post-colonialism, the

struggle is shown to occur within discourses, as each is contaminated by the demands and incursions of others. Finally, then, the novel exemplifies the argument of this thesis that post-colonialism in the settler society may usefully be seen as the problematic rather than the (re)solution of the cultural inheritances of colonisation.

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Notes.

- 1 Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 54.
- 2 Stephen Slemon, "Monuments of Empire: Allegory/Counter-Discourse/Post-Colonial Writing," *Kunapipi*, 9, No. 3 (1987), p. 14.
- 3 Witi Ihimaera, *The Matriarch* (Auckland: Heinemann, 1986).
- 4 Simon During, "Postmodernism or Postcolonialism," *Landfall*, 39, No. 3 (1985), p. 370.
- 5 Helen Tiffin, "Post-Colonial Literatures and Counter-Discourse," *Kunapipi*, 9, No. 3 (1987), p. 22.
- 6 Tiffin, p. 17.
- 7 The inside back dust jacket of the Heinemann 1986 hardback edition tells us that "The sequel to *The Matriarch*, entitled *Tiana*, is in preparation", and in *The Press*, Monday November 27, 1989, we are told that Ihimaera "has been given a \$30,000 scholarship for a sequel to *The Matriarch*. In an interview with Mark Williams, recorded in September 1991 and published in *Landfall*, 179, 45, No. 3 (1991), Ihimaera explains, "I have decided to delay the writing of *Tiana*" (288). However, it is awaited by Atareta Poananga, who writes "One hopes that the sequel . . . will be different. . . . [O]ne hopes for Maori women's sake that Ihimaera will have exorcised his devils about women by the time *Tiana* is published" ("*The Matriarch*: Takahia Wahine Toa: Trample on Strong Women," Part 2, *Broadsheet* Jan/Feb 1987: 29). Tom Weston concludes his review in *The Press* (27 December, 1986), by claiming that "The struggle between [Tiana] and Artemis, confusing at times, is only lightly touched on in the first volume. In round two we will see this develop further. If the first volume pictures the Matriarch as the spider, how will the second volume picture Tiana?"
- 8 Peter Beatson, *The Healing Tongue: Themes in Contemporary Maori Literature* (Palmerston North: Massey University, Studies in New Zealand Art & Society, 1989), p. 53.
- 9 Janet Potiki, "A dance with the past": Review of *The Matriarch*, *NZ Listener*, August 16, 1986, p. 55.
- 10 Alex Calder, Review of *The Matriarch*, *Landfall*, 41, No. 1 (1987), p. 79.
- 11 Simon During, "Waiting for the Post: Some Relations Between Modernity, Colonization, and Writing," in Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin (eds), *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 29.
- 12 C.K. Stead, *Answering to the Language: Essays on Modern Writers*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1989), p. 194.
- 13 Stead, p. 195.
- 14 Atareta Poananga, "*The Matriarch*: Takahia Wahine Toa: Trample on Strong Women", Part 1, *Broadsheet*, (December 1986), p. 25.

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- 15 Poananga, Part 1, p. 26.
- 16 Poananga, Part 2, p. 25.
- 17 Poananga, Part 1, p. 27.
- 18 Poananga, Part 1, p. 28.
- 19 Tiffin, p. 17.
- 20 Poananga, Part 1, p. 27.
- 21 Poananga, Part 2, p. 27.
- 22 Poananga, Part 2, p. 28.
- 23 Poananga, Part 1, p. 27.
- 24 During, in Adams and Tiffin (eds), p. 32.
- 25 Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (London: Hart-Davis, 1971), cited in Poananga, Part 1, p. 27, and Jane S. Jaquette, "Literary Archetypes and Female Role Alternatives," in Mineke Schipper (ed.), *Unheard Words: Women and literature in Africa, Arab world, Asia, Caribbean and Latin America* (London: Allison and Busby, 1985), cited in Poananga, Part 2, p. 25.
- 26 Poananga, Part 2, p. 27.
- 27 Poananga, Part 1, p. 28.
- 28 Poananga, Part 1, p. 28.
- 29 Poananga, Part 2, p. 29.
- 30 Poananga, Part 2, p. 27.
- 31 Calder, p. 80.
- 32 Michael King, "A Magnificent New Zealand-Baroque Near-Success," *Metro*, 6, No. 62 (August 1986), p. 170.
- 33 Elizabeth Caffin, "A fictional performance": Review of *The Matriarch*, *NZ Listener*, August 16, 1986, p. 52.
- 34 Stead, p. 192.
- 35 Potiki, p. 56.
- 36 Calder, p. 80.
- 37 Mark Williams, *Leaving the Highway: Six Contemporary New Zealand Novelists* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1990), p. 112.
- 38 Jonathan Lamb, "Problems of Originality: or, Beware of Pakeha baring Guilt," *Landfall*, 40, No. 3 (1986), p. 356.

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39 Lamb, p. 357.

40 In *The Journey Narrative in American Literature: Patterns and Departures* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983), Janis P. Stout points out that the "quest may be for spiritual enlightenment, or Truth. . . but in any case it is likely to involve the quest for the quester himself, through discovery of selfhood or self-definition" (p. 16).

41 Another side to this, however, is the implication that the *phallic* 'I' which is dependent upon the mirror, and enables language to suture the split subject, is disrupted with the smashing of the mirrors. Tamatea describes his uncle's voice as "emasculated" (355).

42 Stead, p. 192.

43 Stead, p. 193.

44 Tom Weston, "Maori epic of land and family": Review of *The Matriarch*, *The Press*, 27 December, 1986, p. 19.

45 Calder, p. 81.

46 John Beston's review of *The Matriarch* relates passages to the specific operas from which they derive. See *Landfall*, 41, No. 1 (1987), pp. 84-86.

47 Tiffin, p. 32.

48 Stead, p. 190.

49 Tiffin, p. 32.

50 Williams, p. 136.

51 Poananga, Part 1, p. 27.

52 Williams, p. 112.

53 See Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982) p. 42, for a discussion of narrative evolution.

54 See Stephen Slemon, "Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse," *Canadian Literature*, 116 (1988), for a discussion which provides a useful background and comparison to my argument. Some particular points of relevance to my argument here about *The Matriarch* include his observation that magic realism "seems, in a literary context, to be most obviously operative in cultures situated at the fringes of mainstream literary traditions", and that it may be considered to encode within it, "a concept of resistance to the massive imperial centre and its totalizing systems" (10). Indeed, he claims that "the magic realist text reflects in its language of narration real conditions of speech and cognition within the actual social relations of a post-colonial culture" (12). Further, Slemon argues that "In the language of narration in a magic realist text, a battle between two oppositional systems takes place, each working toward the creation of a different kind of fictional world from the other. Since the ground rules of these two worlds are incompatible, neither can fully come into being, and each remains suspended, locked in a continuous dialectic with the 'other'" (10-11). Thus, "the characteristic manoeuvre of magic realist fiction is that its two separate narrative modes never manage to arrange themselves into any kind of hierarchy" (11).

55 Ripeka Evans, Review of *The Matriarch*, Radio New Zealand; cited in Beatson, p. 54.

56 Beatson, p. 59.

57 For example, Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. 208, explains that "Every literary theory presupposes a certain use of literature, even if what you get out of it is its utter uselessness. Liberal humanist criticism is not wrong to use literature, but wrong to deceive itself that it does not. It uses it to further certain moral values, which are in fact indissociable from certain ideological ones, and in the end imply a particular form of politics." Cited in Ken Arvidson, "Aspects of Contemporary Maori Writing in English," in Graham McGregor and Mark Williams (eds), *Dirty Silence: Aspects of Language and Literature in New Zealand* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 120.

58 Beatson, p. 53.

59 Stead, p. 192.

60 For example, a mythology has built up around the long hiatus in Ihimaera's writing that began in 1975, so that 'reading' of the ten-year literary 'silence' that preceded the publication of *The Matriarch* effectively doubles the 'reading' and mythologising of Artemis. Stead writes that "At least one of his [earlier] stories revealed that he was under pressure to become 'political' -- to lend his skill and his mana to radical Maori protest -- a pressure which at the time he resisted" (191); Williams similarly claims that "The publication of *The Matriarch* followed a decade in which Ihimaera had deliberately stopped writing. In 1975 he had felt that his fiction was inadequate to the political urgencies of the day. He felt dissatisfied with the nostalgic, pastoral form of his early writing" (118); and Caffin argues that "In the nine deliberately silent years since the publication of *The New Net Goes Fishing* a sense of obligation has lain heavy upon him; a sense made the more burdensome by the vigorous, confident and articulate Maori revolution of those years, in which he himself has played a part in other ways. Recognition of Witi's acute awareness of audiences, Maori and Pakeha, in New Zealand and abroad, goes a long way to explaining why *The Matriarch* is the kind of novel it is" (52). Ihimaera's own contribution, occurring in an interview with Williams in *Landfall*, 179, 45, No. 3 (1991), is somewhat differently accented: "when I was published I honestly didn't realise that *Pounamu Pounamu* would score such success. And when the next three books were also successful, one year after the next, I think the cumulative effect, the cumulative responsibility, hit me. So I decided to stop writing for ten years" (282).

61 Stead, p. 195.

62 Poananga, Part 1, p. 27.

63 Poananga, Part 1, p. 26.

64 Williams, p. 122.

65 Stead, p. 191.

66 Poananga, Part 1, p. 27.

67 Poananga, Part 1, p. 26.

68 Poananga, Part 1, p. 28.

69 Poananga, Part 1, p. 28.

70 For example, in Margaret Orbell, *The Natural World of the Maori* (Auckland: Collins, 1985), Orbell records two kinds of significance for the spider: an ominous one in which "a

man with hidden intentions might be likened to a spider in its web" (176), and a more benevolent one, in which "The souls of the dead kept their concern for the relatives they had left behind, and often they visited them. They came sometimes in dreams and seances, they returned as spiders or moths" (83).

71 A. H. McLintock (ed.), *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1966). The passages in question come from Keith Sorrenson's entry, Section III under "Maori Wars", entitled "The Effects of the Wars of the Maori People", and dealing with land confiscations.

72 See Williams, pp. 128-137.

73 Williams, p. 136.

74 McLintock (ed.), p. vii.

75 Poananga claims scathingly that "This book has two messages. One is that the real conflict is not between the coloniser and the colonised, and the divide and rule tactics used to subjugate. It is internalised within by those who are Maori, but who also have Pakeha blood. (We all have a Pakeha in the woodpile somewhere!)" (Part 1: 27).

76 Similarly, identification works in the opposite direction, as Tamatea narrates, "My little daughter Bianca screamed with joy one morning when we were driving to the airport to catch an early flight. 'Look at all my cousins,' she said. The streets were crisp and clean but filled with Maori workers, a surreal vision of bottom-barrel people tramping with leaden feet on their ways to factories and the first shift" (66).

77 Identifications are posited both across time, as in the case of Te Kooti, where "what happened to Te Kooti is what has happened to all of us" (133), and across space, such as the textual invocation of the Italian Risorgimento through excerpts from Verdi's operas. The Risorgimento movement existed in the 1860s -- the decade of Te Kooti's exile and retaliation, and during the lifetime of Wi Pere Halbert, who would later enter parliament to do battle with the Pakeha over Maori land and sovereignty. The Risorgimento comprised two principal arms, working towards the same goal: the democratic *Giovine Italia* (Young Italy) which, under Guiseppe Mazzini aimed to educate the Italian people to a sense of nationhood, and which parallels Wi Pere's parliamentary activities; and the guerilla movement led by Garibaldi, which could be likened to Te Kooti's warrior status and strategies. See "Italy," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (Chicago: William Benton Publishers, 1971), 12, pp. 758-760. In the twentieth century, Tamatea attends an indigenous conference in Hawaii (201), and visits Inuit friends in Saskatoon. The latter occurs at the time of Uncle Alexis's death: "When my friend Hinuk found out about the death she arranged for a memorial service, in the Inuit way. After it was over I stood out in the snow and looked for the Dog Star" (448).

78 In Parliament, Wi Pere made the point that "'The Europeans acquire prosperity without being possessors of land in large quantities. . . . But the Maoris, although they may hold a great deal of land, cannot acquire prosperity, or do not acquire it'" (315). Much later, when urbanisation has more thoroughly removed the Maori people from even their land, Tamatea recalls, "I thought to myself that there must be many of us, in many houses like this, who feel the desolation of being landless and colonised in our own land. . . . [T]he land has been taken and where there is no land the people must leave and find new livelihood in the cities to the north and to the south" (50).

79 Calder, p. 83.

80 Margery Fee, "Romantic Nationalism and the Image of Native People in Contemporary English-Canadian Literature," in Thomas King, Cheryl Calver, and Helen Hoy (eds), *The*



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*Native in Literature: Canadian and Comparative Perspectives* (Downsview: ECW Press, 1987), p. 17.

## Bibliography

### I. Introduction.

This is a bibliography of works cited or consulted directly in preparation of the thesis. It is not a general or comprehensive bibliography in relation to the topic of post-colonial subjectivity and discourse. The principal limiting criterion on the scope of references has been the focus in the thesis on Australia, Canada and New Zealand as settler post-colonial societies. Most references relate directly to these contexts, and where other or more general references have been used, they have been selected specifically for their relevance to the central premises and contexts of the topic.

A number of difficulties relating to the organisation of materials presented themselves in compiling this bibliography. Although the quantity of references required some organisation into sections, the rationale for the divisions was no simple matter. An author-centred bibliography did not seem appropriate to the thesis which, in problematising the 'individual', questions the status of the author with reference to post-structuralist theories of cultural production; nor would it necessarily have provided the greatest clarity for the reader. It also did not make sense to hierarchise materials into 'primary' and 'secondary' sources, other than the fiction which may be differentiated into those texts discussed and those to which I have simply referred. For one thing, this procedure would have meant choosing between the basis of hierarchisation as either a matter of generic hierarchy, of frequency of use, or centrality to the argument of the thesis. It does not follow that material of central importance to the thesis is that which has been used the most frequently. Further, the manner of use of materials in the thesis means that, for example, although fictional texts are objects of analysis in the thesis -- object-texts -- they cannot be seen as more 'primary' than certain interviews and critical articles which have also been analysed as object-texts. In the context of a thesis whose object is discourse, it made most sense to organise sources into discursive categories, namely: Fiction; Textual Criticism and Commentary; Cultural Commentary or Critique; Colonial and Post-Colonial Theory; and Other Theoretical Perspectives and Analyses.

A further problem consisted in the fact that quite apart from the breadth of references required for this topic, the thesis reflects the increasing trend towards the interaction of theories and fields of 'knowledge', as do most of the sources themselves. Few texts provided no problems of intersection or overlap between categories: in analyses offered by post-colonialism, post-modernism and feminism, for example, it is very often difficult (indeed mistaken) to determine what is theory, and what is cultural commentary or critique; similarly, post-colonial readings of texts are very often both textual criticism or commentary and cultural

commentary or critique. Although such overlap cannot be avoided, and is in fact celebrated within the thesis, for the purposes of this bibliography I have located each source within the section which reflects what I consider to be its principal focus. In addition, each section begins with a short introduction which outlines the basis for inclusion.

## II. Fiction

This section includes only those texts to which I have referred in the thesis. It includes both texts analysed at varying degrees of length, and others referred to in expansion or substantiation of an argument. Many further fictional texts would have served the thesis just as well; however to attempt a comprehensive list of these would have been both impractical and outside the scope of my purpose. Where one or more stories from a volume of stories have been used, only the name of the volume has been included in the bibliography (information relating to the stories is included in the end-notes to chapters).

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#### IV. Cultural Commentary/Critique

This section comprises the historical and political sources which form the chronological 'background' to the cultural contexts under discussion, as well as the texts of more general and contemporary 'cultural' (as opposed to specific textual) analysis found in critical articles, journalism, conference proceedings, non-fictional and (auto)biographical texts, political tracts and philosophical discourses. These works provide crucial cultural and discursive settings for the discussion in the thesis, and should be considered as constitutive and interactive in relation to other materials.

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## V. Colonial and Post-Colonial Theory/Analysis

This section includes a range of texts, many of which overlap with other sections; indeed it is the nature of (post-)colonial theory to work through the discourses of others. (Post-)colonialism is not generally theorised outside of the context of such discourses; it is predicated on emergent analysis rather than the imposition of models. For this reason, those sources which offer a textual analysis or commentary and, in doing so, address themselves explicitly to some aspect of (post-)colonialism, are located in this section along with more narrowly theoretical texts. Similarly, sources which theorise post-colonialism in relation to other theoretical (or cultural) analyses such as feminism or post-modernism are located in this section. In short, in my own gesture of textual appropriation, the (post-)colonial aspect of these materials is privileged over the others.

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## VI. Other Theoretical Perspectives and Analyses.

This section could not be broken down further into specific categories (such as feminism or psychoanalysis) because of the degree of interaction and intersection between its constituents. Indeed, it is the interaction of these analyses which has generally rendered them useful to the thesis, as well as consistent with the general approach of problematising discrete bodies of 'knowledge' in relation to the contaminations and syncretisms of culture. Given the (post-)colonial emphasis of the thesis and the privileging and prioritising of that theoretical project, it is sufficient simply to list all 'other' theoretical material within one section.

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